


"Some who have blessed me most were women preachers."

Billy Graham, San Diego News Conference, August, 1976.



# **Mama Was A Preacher**

**By Dr. Marvin Jackson**



Top: L to R Marvin Jackson, his father Chester and his brother Paul (now also a Minister) and his mother Rev. Ruth—1940's.

Middle: Rev. Ruth ready to preach the gospel.

Below: Rev. Ruth, Dr. Jackson and Bishop Sheen at the ABC Convention; Boston, Mass.





## About the Author

Marvin Jackson has held Evangelistic Meetings in such varied places as the Marshall Islands, West Va., Calif., Nevada, Mass., and Maine. He has traveled in every state and every continent but two. His education consists of a B.S. with a major in Physical Ed.,



a B.D., D.D., and a Ph.D. He served in the Maritime Service at sixteen during World War II. In the Korean War he served in the 54th Infantry Division as an enlisted man, on Heartbreak Ridge and Christmas Hill. While serving on Heartbreak Ridge, he surrendered his life to preach the gospel. He was later commissioned in the army reserves and served as a Special Service Officer, later transferring to the Chaplains Branch and attained the rank of Captain. He has served in the Civil Air Patrol.

His ministry has been one of preaching the cross which shows God's great love. He Pastors the 800 plus member First Baptist Church and has held meetings for various denominations.

Dr. Jackson is also an amateur song writer and a father of 4 children and *...his Mama was a Preacher!*

*Oh that my words were now written!  
Oh that they were printed in a book.  
(Job 19:23)*

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They called her "Rev. Ruth", I called her "Mama". This third generation Preacher, ordained to the gospel ministry in 1929 when there were very few women Preachers, can help you as she helped hundreds of others during her more than forty-one years of ministry. In November of 1975, she was promoted to glory.

She was buried with a little pin that she nearly always wore, given to her by her mother, that simply read, "Others". The purpose of this book is to help others. My Prayer is that it will help you.

May Jesus Christ be Praised!

Marvin Jackson

Dear: R  
Love  
Jim  
Bless you with your  
Mary-Jane



# Mama Was A Preacher

(A THIRD GENERATION PREACHER)

Reverend Ruth Emma Hodges Jackson, B.D.

DR. MARVIN JACKSON

*Reward Books, 4307 Euclid Ave., San Diego, CA 92115*

This dissertation is dedicated to Reverend Ruth Emma Hodges Jackson by a grateful son who can honestly say that the two things that she has given him were first, see that he knew about her wonderful Saviour and secondly, that he received a good education.

Marvin Jackson, D.D.

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**Billy Graham**  
San Diego Press Conference, August, 1976



## *Chapter 1*

### BIRTH, EARLY CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY BACKGROUND

Ruth Emma Hodges was born in the city of Jersey City, New Jersey May 12, 1901. She was the youngest of nine children. One of the children died in early infancy. She came from a pure English stock, with both parents being born in the Southern part of Great Britain and later moving to the United States and settling on the east coast. Reverend Samuel Horatio Hodges L.L.B. Quaker Minister (Friends), was born in Somerset County, England into a Lay Preacher's family and came under a godly influence from earliest childhood. His early education took place in England. Later he attended Boston University Law School from which he graduated. He served in the army of Great Britain for a period of time. He also was a widely traveled man, having crossed the ocean several times. Not only was he a minister, but an inventor, song writer, newspaper writer, and lawyer. He gave his life to the Lord in the very famous Park St. Congregational Church in Boston, Massachusetts.

Ruth Hodges' Mother, Emma Jane Hilton Inchomb Hodges, was born in England in Kent County. Her



## MAMA WAS A PREACHER

education consisted basically of private schools. Her family was quite well to do and she lacked for nothing in material goods or services as a young child. Perhaps the most well known of her ancestors was Captain Hilton who was the last surviving naval officer at the battle of Trafalgar with Lord Admiral Nelson. She was an unusually wise woman, greatly admired and respected by all her children. She was well read, but perhaps her spiritual qualities enabled her to leave such an outstanding legacy.

Ruth Hodges Jackson's grandfather on her father's side was Samuel Hodges, a Lay Preacher. He prayed over his young son Samuel, "Make of this boy a preacher."

Ruth Hodges was born into a family that had heard the call of God and had responded to this call in such a marvelous way that the foundations of Hell were shaken and the church of Jesus Christ was strengthened.

Her early childhood was spent in Jersey City, New Jersey. She moved from there to Falls, New York and then to Clintondale, New York and from there to Portsmouth, Rhode Island, then Westfield, Rhode Island, and before entering high school, to Rochester, New Hampshire.

In infancy, the dread disease pneumonia struck. The doctor told her parents that there was absolutely no hope for her. After the doctor left, her mother offered up this very simple prayer: "If this child is going to be a blessing, heal her." From that moment she began to recover and regain her health. It is needless to say that there was a great deal of joy in the Hodges family. Having lost one child in infancy, there was no doubt a great deal of relief to know that this child would be spared to be a blessing.

## Birth, Early Childhood and Family Background

She became a very happy, healthy, singing, active child and it was said she was always dancing around. At one time she told her older brother that she would not be bossed. All of the brothers and sisters tried their very best to bring up little sister. Perhaps her mother had heard that too many cooks spoil the broth, and in this case too many guardians could spoil the child so she finally had to tell them very plainly, "If you'll leave her to me, she'll turn out all right."

Parsonage life was something that she had to adjust to but perhaps the biggest adjustment was the fact that it seemed that Sundays would just never end. There was service after service and this poor dear little girl had to attend every one. This left with her, at a very early age, the impression that she just didn't like church.

My mother began public school at the age of seven in Portsmouth, Rhode Island. She was considerably above the average student and skipped a grade in grammar school. She particularly liked to read, and any subject would catch her interest. Many of her dearest friends at that early age were the books that she loved so dearly. Mother particularly has told me how she liked outdoor sports of any kind and enjoyed many happy hours participating in them.

Her brothers were Sampson, who later became a Salvation Army officer and rose to quite a high rank; Caleb, who entered the Presbyterian ministry; Joseph and John who both became businessmen. Joe had a long and distinguished period of service with Standard Oil; Jack, as he was called, founded J.C. Hodges & Co., brokers in hides and skins, which is located in Lexington, Massachusetts and at the present time headed up by his only child, Alan Hodges.

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The sisters were: Phoebe, who later became the wife of Reverend Percy Bent and had many distinguished years of service in the Methodist ministry, Mary, became a registered nurse and served in the first World War in France. (Her married name was Mrs. Orris Jensvold) Martha, who entered the Salvation Army and served as a missionary in India and later married Reverend William Freeman. At this writing, only three girls of the family survive: My mother, Phoebe, and Martha.

The one that influenced my mother the most from earliest childhood on, was her sister Mary who had a particular loving way with people and was always concerned about helping and serving others. One of the earliest impressions in a church service that has stayed with her all of these years was of a former slave, who stood up during the Quaker quiet time of worship and sang, "Let the Stars of the Morning Shout for Joy and Sing the Redemption Story." She thought, even as a little girl that this saint had something that really helped him that she just didn't have.

Sometime after this in one of the church services someone sang "Not for Ease or Worldly Pleasure." Really wanting ease and worldly pleasures deep down inside, she became convicted that she was really not where she should be and was greatly troubled. Shortly after beginning to feel this need and conviction she accepted Christ as her Savior.

## *Chapter 2*

### SECONDARY AND COLLEGE EDUCATION

My mother's first year of high school was spent at the very well known Moses Brown School in Providence, Rhode Island. The remaining three years of high school were spent in Cranford, New Jersey. She was very happy-go-lucky and a good student.

The person that influenced her most in high school was her English teacher, who challenged her to be sure to finish what she started. This bit of advice has stayed with her down through the years and had a great deal to do with her feeling that she ought to stick it out whatever the situation might be. This helped her enormously while attending college, with great financial difficulties, and her years in the ministry. In high school she was not beyond skipping class and taking a canoe ride with her closest girlfriend. When asked by one of her teachers, which she thought was the most important, her education or a canoe ride, she confessed that canoeing was much more important. Being a good student she had little trouble, but her life was being formed in such a way in those early years that she could be of service and understand those who were in great need.

It must be said that in high school she really had no clear understanding of what she would like to do with

her life. She of course knew, and definitely felt, that she would continue her education, or at least receive training beyond high school, of some kind. After high school, probably because of the great influence that her sister Mary had on her life, and because of her desire to serve somewhere and do something, she entered nurses training.

She found that she enjoyed nurses training and did quite well during the year and a half that she spent in this work. One patient said to her, "You are the first person who has been kind to me in years." He died shortly after that. This experience pointed out to her, and brought within her grasp, the deep feeling that never left her that she ought to be kind to people. Even though nursing was not to be her life's work, it perhaps helped to lay somewhat of a foundation for not only being kind to people who are well, but being kind to people who stand in great need.

At this particular time in her life she had very little, if any, illness of any kind outside of the earlier mention of pneumonia in infancy. Her health began to fail and she was forced to abandon the career that she had chosen. This caused her consciously, as well as sub-consciously, to re-evaluate her life and to consider what she was going to do with it. She had previously determined never to go into Christian work, but her mother had prayed, "Get her out of that hospital and into Thy will." So, what appeared to be a crushing disappointment and a frustrating time, in later years was adjudged to be the hand of God upon her life in a very real and wonderful way. The door to nurse's training was closed, but with God closing this door in such a definite way, the time came for her to make a total commitment. At 1:00 in the morning she simply said, "Whatever comes, Thy



will be done." At that time, a peace entered her life, not the kind that the world could give but only that God Himself could give to the heart.

After careful prayer and consideration she decided to enter Gordon College in the fall of 1922. She had, in the back of her mind, the desire to possibly serve as a missionary, even though she definitely did not feel a clear cut call to that, or any definite field that she should prepare herself to serve in.

Much to her surprise, upon arriving at Gordon College, a school dedicated to the training of Christian workers of various kinds, she found happy Christians there. The first place that this really made such a great impression on her was in a prayer meeting. For the first time in her life she found that you didn't have to be unhappy to be a Christian. This revolutionized her entire thought patterns.

Perhaps it might shock you to realize that my mother entered college with the very limited finances of fifty cents. Her father, the Reverend Samuel Hodges, had passed away in his eighties, just before she entered Gordon. (She was born when grandfather was in his sixties.) Arriving at college with fifty cents, left one with no alternative but to find work, and find it quickly. She applied for work at the college and was told there just wasn't any at that time. However, in no time, a woman came who wanted someone to care for her daughter in the afternoon. What an answer to prayer that was and what rejoicing within the heart of a young girl with a large appetite. My mother took care of this precious little girl for two years. This enabled her to have a job that she could do and to continue her education. Of course, from time to time, there was help from home, but certainly not the help many receive attending college.

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During the last two years of college my mother was very fortunate to obtain a position in the Baptist Church in Somerville, Massachusetts. The position consisted basically of youth work and visitation. This helped my mother to develop ways and means of working with the young people which she carried through her ministry.

God does not always call at the same age, nor in the same way to enter the ministry. Her earliest concept of really entering the ministry where she could point and say this was a definite call from God, came while in college at about the age of twenty-two. God, who at one time told Moses to quit praying and get the people moving, really reached my mother in quite a unique way. A very close friend of hers, William Murphy, asked mother to sing at a mission service that he was conducting (my mother did sing and play the piano). My mother, kidding him said, "No, No, I won't sing for you but I'll speak for you." He said, "I'll take you up on it!" For the next two weeks she prayed, "Lord, just give me something to say." To this day, she vividly remembers that she spoke on Abraham, "I called him, I blessed him, I increased him." When the invitation to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior was given, a woman medical doctor who served there, came forward and said, "Young lady, I want to talk theology with you." My mother said, "I haven't studied theology yet so I can't talk theology with you, but I'll tell you how you can find Christ as your Savior. If you'll kneel down right now and pray with me, 'Lord Jesus, forgive me of my sins and come into my heart, He'll do it.'" "This lady who had traveled, and who had studied theology, made this child-like prayer and Jesus came in and took possession of her life. My mother was told that this doc-

tor's face just literally shone as she came to help the people in that mission.

After that service, there seemed to be no doubt that God had called her to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ Jesus, and to win others to Him. Bill Murphy and his girlfriend, Reatha, who Bill later married, had a great influence on my mother's life. Their friendship endured, and because of her not wanting to sing at that time, and in jest saying that she would speak; God put a new song within her heart, the song of, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." After speaking at the mission, other students at the college began to encourage her to really seek God's leading as to the question, "Lord, what would you have me to do?"

The professor in college that influenced her the most was a Dr. Byington, who taught homiletics. He told her quite frankly, "I seldom advise a woman to go into the ministry, but I do advise you to do this." This professor was greatly admired by the students. My mother particularly notes that they seemed to have a great deal of confidence in him and what he would say. He told my mother, in confidence of course, that he gave her the highest mark in preaching that he had ever given to anyone. She was elated.

President Nathan Wood of Gordon College was a very good friend and gave her encouragement along the path that she was endeavoring to walk. As she looks back on these years, she realizes that many people and many things had a great effect on her life. Her mother's prayers that she would do God's will, her willingness to submit to that will, and the fact that even from the very first sermon, the power of the Holy Spirit was in her ministry and the message was not all hers, but given to her by the Lord.

## MAMA WAS A PREACHER

During her college years she spoke in several missions, open air services, youth services, and occasionally supplied for her pastor in Somerville, Massachusetts when he was out of town.

Between her junior and senior year she received a great thrill in her life. Being recommended by her sister and her husband, Reverend and Mrs. Percy C. Bent, she was able to obtain the summer supply for the Methodist Church in Mapleton, Maine. This helped her to understand that God was confirming the call upon her life by opening up this door of opportunity to preach.

She was greatly encouraged by this summer and began to know that she could do His work with His help and His guidance. The church attendance was good and the giving good. She was loyally supported by the people and particularly by a former Methodist pastor by the name of Mr. Thompson who had studied for the ministry but was not able to do this work because his health had broken down. My mother has said, "People really accepted me during that summer pastorate." This church had called a man who was to be on the field in the fall and of course Mom needed to return to college to finish her senior year, but this gave her a real taste of not only living in a pastor's home, as she had done during her childhood, but herself being the pastor. My mother's constant prayer she has shared with me was that she would have His message.

There was no question that God had called her for His service as she entered her senior year at college. She said that her heart was open for whatever God had for her.

After college a number of different doors opened for her to supply at various churches before the day came

when this young lady was to begin pastorates that would see her serve in Maine, New York, and Pennsylvania, covering a period of forty-one years. God's word states that the "gifts and callings of God are without repentance," and at this particular time He chose to call a woman to move out into the harvest field.



### *Chapter 3*

#### **DIFFICULT MOUNTAINS TO CLIMB**

Because my mother felt so strongly the call of God to enter the ministry, and because she decided that she particularly wanted to go with the American Baptist Churches, and because particularly in that day, there would be so few women entering this field, no survey of her life would be any where near complete unless a number of the difficulties would be mentioned.

From the very beginning she faced frustration and pressures. Though it was hard for a man, a woman's lot almost seemed to be impossible. God specializes in the impossible and by this chapter perhaps others will see "where there is no way God will make a way."

In her college class of homiletics, the men never seemed to be impressed no matter how good her sermons were, no matter how hard she tried. The only exception in that class seemed to be her professor, Dr. Byington. From the very beginning she knew her sermons would have to be masterpieces to even have the people listen to what she was going to say. She possessed a very analytical mind and was able to put together sermons in such a way that even her severest critics had to listen.

Perhaps one of the great difficulties was during the time that she was in college, she was very bluntly told by one of her classmates that she would just never be able to get a church because she was a woman. You can imagine what a discouraging statement that was to hear ringing in her ears. "You'll never get a church because you are a woman." I can't help but wonder if others might not have quit at that moment. Another comment that came her way was, "Certainly because you are a woman you would not be strong enough physically to do the kind of demanding work that a church requires."

She has told me many times that God just seemed to give her the needed strength for whatever situation she was involved in. Perhaps it would be wise to point out that my mother is not a large woman. She is five feet four inches tall and barely goes over one hundred thirty pounds. She is not large boned, quite pretty, and perhaps at first glance might really give the impression that she was not physically capable of this work. One of the statements that she heard, that I'm sure she has never been able to conquer is: "Men will just never be told by a woman what to do." This of course was

something that was heard many times and in many ways. My mother resolved that within her mind in a very unique way; by simply saying that her chief business was to tell men and women to repent of their sins and accept Christ as Savior and do His will. She did not come to tell men that she had a superior intellect, or that she could certainly tell them how to run their business better than they could, but to tell them of Christ and His love. She did not come to give orders but to bring God's order that men must repent and come to the place of salvation.

Because she had determined in her mind that her understanding of the Scripture pointed her to enter the Baptist ministry, she was confronted by the statement, "A woman can't perform a baptismal service," and of course we do practice a believer's baptism of immersion. My mother had to come to the decision that all of her baptismal services in all the years that she preached were performed by other ministers. I might state here that marriage ceremonies, funerals, communion services, and all the other activities of the work were carried on by my mother. The baptizing by guest ministers did not cause any difficulty within the churches that she was privileged to serve.

The often heard statement that I'm sure is used as much today as it was then, where the Apostle Paul instructed the women to keep silent in the churches. By many people this was made in a statement to my mother, that if women should keep silent in the churches they certainly couldn't preach. My mother's answer to this, I'm sure with a great deal of soul searching, was from Galatians, Chapter 3, verse 28, which states in part, "In Christ there is neither male

nor female.” I’m not sure from my observation if this satisfied the critics but nevertheless it satisfied my mother and I’m sure that perhaps many later became convinced when they found that she was far from a silent preacher.

Another of the difficulties that was pointed out to my mother was the fact that she really could not do an adequate job presiding at business meetings. Perhaps this would sound strange today but at that time there were very few meetings that were presided over by women. It seemed in this case that God gave her the perfect answer for the conducting of church business meetings, and to satisfy any male ego that might have been crushed by the fact that a woman was to be the presiding officer. She never conducted a business meeting but always asked one of the men to preside. It pays to be as wise as a serpent and as harmless as a dove. Our Lord said, “Render unto Caesar, the things that are Caesar’s and render unto God the things that are God’s”. Certainly mother was always careful to never slight the men in the congregation.

One of the very interesting comments that was made to my mother was that she would preach too long because she was a woman. Evidently down through the centuries women have not only been accused of talking too much, but also too long.

My mother, having had to make her way in this world and overcome many obstacles decided to take these discouraging words and turn them into good advice. She has told me that because people would expect her to preach too long, she deliberately watched the time very carefully and that she tried to stay within proper limits in every service. She did come to preach and they came

to listen, and I'm sure she didn't want them to finish before she did.

Several different people said to her that she would want her own way because she was filling a place which men usually occupied. Time and time again, she emphasized that because she was the pastor of an American Baptist Church and the majority vote would rule, that she would abide by the decisions that were made. Many of the objections that she received would come from other women. One of these which might be hard to fathom, was that women would not like to have another woman preach to them. I suppose that only another woman could really explain this, but perhaps in the day that my mother preached, this was so uncommon and women were used to such a different life style that even they could not picture a woman standing in the pulpit bringing to them the words of God. I have to be objective, and yet personal in this story that I am writing, and would share with the reader that my wife, who heard my mother preach several times before we were married and afterwards, and who is very fond of my mother, just simply preferred hearing a man preach. My Mother and I were instrumental in leading Millie to the Lord before we were married so it was not a question of my Mother's ability. My Mother frankly admits there was prejudice, but God gave her wisdom and perseverance so that she overcame a great deal of this. Perhaps when the women saw God's blessing upon the church that she pastored, they were convinced that Mama really was a preacher.

No doubt down through the centuries women have never been known for keeping secrets. It was said that a woman would talk and tell the business of other people

and of course now and then church people tell things in confidence that they really don't wish shouted from the rooftops. My mother was told that she would talk and tell the business of those that confided in her. Evidently, mother needed help along this line because she said that God helped her to keep still and never tell anything she knew about anyone. I can imagine that it might be difficult for people to build up confidence in a woman pastor and confess to her the things that might be easier for them to share with a man, but from my earliest childhood I remember that mother, who was well-trained, was able to counsel many when it was needed.

Young people, and I'm talking particularly about teenagers here, thought, "She is a woman, she'll never be able to discipline us." Her comment on this is simply, "God helped me to handle them." She soon put this discouraging word to rest as God had given her the opportunity while in college, of working with young people in a large Baptist Church, learning what to do and what not to do. Possibly being brought up in a large family and being the youngest, she had to have the ability to hold her own. Her youth groups were of good size. The young people were responsive to her leadership and the church knew that she could handle them.

How could you possibly be a homemaker and do a good job in the church? I imagine this is being heard quite frequently with so many women working today. It probably was quite difficult for the men and the women of the congregation to understand how a woman could be all things to all people and do anything at all in her home. My mother found, in order to really do the job she was called to do in the church, she had to have part time help in the home. This way she could manage them

both. I have quite interesting recollections of some of the domestic help that we had, but then again that is another story, but as a young boy I remember that I thought mama was pretty hard to beat.

Of all the difficulties that my mother ran into, the one I always like to hear the best was the difficulty she had of even getting the opportunity to preach in a given church. I need to digress here long enough to say that in our Baptist Churches, pastors are not appointed to a charge, with the sometime possible exception of a mission church that might be started by the convention. The pastors in Baptist churches are suggested by area ministers or Executive Secretaries who know of a church vacancy. The candidate that is suggested, by invitation of the church, is invited to fill the pulpit and then if the congregation votes to call that person, and the vote is in favor of that person, and is accepted, the candidate then moves to that field and becomes pastor.

The other approach that is used and is more common today would be a pulpit committee that would hear the person wishing to move, in his own pulpit, or in another where he might be speaking. In my mother's case, to even be heard by a church that was searching for a pastor, the supervisor (I will not mention his name, even though he has since gone to be with the Lord) would tell the church, "I can either send you a poor man or a good woman." Take your choice. Can you imagine being confronted with a choice like that? A poor man or a good woman. The good woman got the church! Mother was nearly always sent to the most difficult churches. She pastored churches particularly in Maine, that were in the smaller communities, and to be perfectly frank, could not really support a man. It would have been next

to impossible for a man, in many cases with a family, to come to these communities. Mother felt that it was very difficult going to these churches, and yet these churches were blessed with good attendance and financial increase. It is a matter of record that many of these churches had received convention mission support money and had not been on their own until mama became the preacher.

One of the jolts that my mother received was after pastoring the Baptist church in Perham, Maine, an ordination service was to be called for the expressed purpose of ordaining my mother to the gospel ministry. She pastored before being ordained, but it was decided to seek ordination. One of the leading ministers in the State said that he would never vote to ordain her simply because he would not vote for the ordination of a woman. He also stated that if it was voted by the counsel to offer ordination, he would not attend the ordination service.

In our Baptist churches it is customary when a person has given evidence of being set apart for the gospel ministry, the churches in that association, as it was called at that time, were invited to send delegates to examine the credentials and background that the person had to offer and to ascertain if they were called of God to the gospel ministry. You can understand what a difficult situation she found herself in when one of the leading ministers made the statement of being against this. Nevertheless, after a thorough examination, she was ordained to the gospel ministry in the American Baptist Convention. A note needs to be added to this, first that this minister became one of my mother's most loyal friends, and second that mother was one of the



earliest ordained women ministers in the entire convention. Since that date I imagine many have faced this same discrimination, but when God calls He makes a way where there appears to be none. Ruth became known from this day on and is still called "Reverend Ruth." I often refer to her as "Reverend Mother."

After overcoming all of these objections and difficulties adjusting her life and her ministry, one memory will never leave her. When she received her call to her first pastorate, where she stayed seven years she was told, "We will try you for six months to see if you can do the work, being a woman." Not only did she do it, but under her ministry the church prospered and grew like it never had before or since.

Sometimes it is only by having difficulties that it is determined what a person is made of. The Apostle Paul said, "We are more than conquerors through Him that loves us." After forty-one years in the gospel ministry, I would say of my mother, "She came to the ministry, she saw the ministry, and she conquered the difficulties that would have kept her from the ministry."

## *Chapter 4*

### THE MAINE YEARS

The first church that my mother became pastor of was in the very northern part of the State of Maine in a rather small town of about a thousand. The church had decided as I mentioned earlier, to give her a try for six months because she was a woman. They just weren't sure she could do the work. She began her pastorate in the fall of 1928 in Perham, Maine. Certainly she had picked a tremendous challenge, not only for its location, but the condition in which she found the church. The former pastor, according to the tales that are told, was not very popular with the majority of the people and, rather than go into any of the details, it was felt that he was not able to carry on the work. Let's be frank and honest to admit that it was not easy for my mother to get a church, and she was glad to have this one open.

One of the very first things that stands out in her mind was that one Sunday night at the close of the service, she asked everyone who professed being a Christian to come forward and kneel at the altar. Most of those in the service did this. Then my mother said, "Let's everyone stand up and shake hands with each other." Let me digress just to mention that many of the

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members had been in absolute disagreement, part wanting the former pastor to stay and part wanting him to leave. When they shook hands it seemed to her, from that day forward, that God wonderfully blessed and prospered the work. The church mushroomed to such a great extent that it was full. Many came to the prayer service, finances more than doubled, and my mother said that best of all, during the seven years of her pastorate in Perham, Maine, almost one hundred accepted Jesus Christ as Savior. After accepting Christ they remained faithful members and workers for Christ Jesus, their new found Savior. Not only the worship service, but the Sunday School had great growth.

My mother's testimony tells of a miracle that was performed. One Sunday morning she could not speak out loud but only a bare whisper. When she arrived to conduct the service, the senior deacon said, "Pastor, I don't see how you can possibly preach this morning." She whispered to him that if he would take charge and conduct the service until it was time for her to preach that she would give the sermon. She said that when she stood up to preach her voice was loud and clear. Her topic for that day was, "The Power of the Holy Spirit." For twenty minutes she brought the message. After the service, one dear saint of God told my mother it was the best sermon she had ever heard her preach. As strange as it may seem, after she had finished bringing the message, her voice left her again. Who knows what thoughts went through her mind that day as she prepared lunch and spent the afternoon? When the evening service came she had a song service. I wonder mother dear, why you did not preach Sunday night? Perhaps she felt that one miracle for one day was enough.

One of the tragedies to happen in this small communi-

ty has never left her mind and no doubt never will. A boy came to the house one day and asked if he could take me out for a walk. Mother said, "No, he can't go now, he is resting." I was quite young and I can remember, many times quite often against my will, I was forced to take a nap. The next day he took out a neighbor's little son. When he didn't return with the child, several people became very concerned and a search party was sent out to the surrounding areas. They found the little boy had been murdered.

When my mother heard the sad news, she went down to the neighbor's house. Upon arriving, the neighbor's husband asked her to go into the house and tell the mother that the search party had found her son. When she went into the house the child's mother had been told that her son had been found, but not that he was dead. She was making hot chocolate for him. My mother told her the sad news. Just a short time before this, this mother had accepted Christ as her Lord and Savior. Mother said that she realized this woman had the eternal God as her refuge. The last Sunday night before this boy had been murdered, he had come up to the pulpit with his very fine voice and sang, "If You Win a Soul to Jesus You Will Outshine the Sun and Walk the Golden Streets on High."

There is always sadness and joy ministering to people and one of the great joys was after being in Perham for two years, she came before the ordination committee and they voted to ordain her. She tells me it was a blessed ordination service.

Her first pastorate was filled with many sorrows, and many joys. She learned to love the people and among this group were many that she greatly admired. An

eighty year old Sunday School teacher who so often fed her spiritually, and fed her in her home, a man who later served in the Congress of the United States, deacons who worked with her and many, many more who helped to make her first pastorate one that helped to mold her life and give her the good start that she particularly needed in the ministry. She has since visited many times in this town and kept a life long friendship with so many that were so dear to her.

During the time that she was in Perham, she came to the decision that she ought to further her education beyond college. Between the time that she resigned the Perham church and took up the reins of the church in South Montville, Maine, she attended Gordon Divinity School and earned her B.D. This of course, particularly in those early days when many ministers had very little formal education, in many cases helped her a great deal when she was recommended to various churches.

When she went to South Montville to pastor the church, she not only had an offer from that one church but she had an offer from another one at the same time. Things were really looking up for Reverend Ruth. It would hardly seem conceivable I suppose in some people's minds that there would be two churches that would want my mother at the same time. As she prayed about this matter she felt very clearly that God wanted her to go to South Montville. This church was very small in membership but there were some very faithful members who came in all kinds of weather. One morning, and I can hardly fathom any preacher saying this, it was bitter cold and my mother remembers asking an elderly man if he thought he ought to be out in the cold. He told her that for a long time he had watched his wife

go to church and had made fun of her. One night, for some reason, he suddenly decided to go to church with her. That night he accepted Christ as Lord and Savior and then and there promised God he would always be faithful.

During the time that my mother was there, she met a teacher who was a saint of God. (I think I convinced my mom that she wasn't a good teacher.) Mother said she was a very brave woman and so faithful in the attendance of the worship service. Speaking of this church my mother has mentioned to me how very faithful these people were. There was just that power in my mother's preaching that drew people. The attendance at the worship services picked up considerably. Sunday School showed an increase. One of the particular gifts that our Lord seems to have entrusted to my mother's hands was the gift of really raising the churches finances. Several persons accepted Christ. Her pastorate in this particular church only lasted for a period of two years.

Further south in the state, not too far from Portland, the largest city, two churches had joined together and they needed a pastor. Their pastor had left to serve as a chaplain. It was not long before my mother was serving Bar Mills and Hollis Center. This was a new experience for her having the care of two churches at the same time. The parsonage was in Bar Mills. After the morning service there at 10:00 A.M., she drove to the Hollis Center Church which was three miles away. (I'm not personally too sure she always kept the speed limit.) Mother says what she remembers in driving between those two churches was the fact that so many times the road was slippery. In fact she slipped off the road at least once, she said, but always managed to make it safely. When she went there she was supposed to alter-

nate services in the evening, but it wasn't long before both churches decided they each wanted one evening service. She decided to have the two evening services and along with two services in the mornings made a grand total of four services. Needless to say it was a full Sunday. (They talk about the weaker sex.) Not only did she have four services on Sunday, she had two prayer services and two youth groups each week. There were those who accepted Christ Jesus in each church. She remembers well that many faithless members became faithful. Finances increased so dramatically that they were able to redecorate the Hollis Center Church and have new pews, new rug on the pulpit, and a new ceiling in the Bar Mills Church, also a beautiful picture window of Christ.

After spending four years there, my mother decided that another challenge waited for her in another community. The next commitment on Reverend Ruth's itinerary was to the Baptist Church in Canton, Maine.

One particular thing stands out in her mind during the time she pastored in Canton, even though this was to be her shortest pastorate. One night in the evening service, after the invitation, a young man accepted Christ as Lord and Savior. This young man, from that day on, felt the call of God to go as a missionary. He suffered from rheumatic fever, but felt that God would heal him and that he would be able to serve. When God calls he makes a way. My mother said the Lord must have called him because for many years he has served in Alaska. His name is Reverend Ralph Daily.

The parsonage was in very poor condition, right next to a river and was extremely damp. I might add as just a matter of interest, that even though my mother had

only served for such a short time, some sixteen years later, I became the pastor of the same United Baptist Church of Canton, Maine. This was my first pastorate. She must have done a very good job there to have her son follow her footsteps.

The executive secretary made the suggestion that my mother move from Canton to Monson, Maine. This was a Federated church where she had the unique experience of ministering to both Baptists and Congregationalists. Even perhaps more unique was the fact that for six months they worshiped in one church, then had to be very careful to move to the other church for six months, and to move on the exact date. One time mother says she completely forgot it was time to move to the other church but one of the faithful kindly reminded her.

Monson was a very interesting town, not too far from the great Moosehead Lake Region. This particular town had, for a number of years, been quite famous worldwide for the slate that it produced. It was inhabited by many Swedish and Finnish people who had come to work in the quarries. Among those from Sweden, it was of my recollection that there seemed to be a continuous contest to see who could consume the most coffee in a twenty-four hour period. This (tea) totaler, who rarely drank coffee, was nevertheless, even with her peculiarities, accepted by the community and by the church.

She was quite influential in this town and often spoke in the local High School.

Not only did Mother speak in the school there but she spoke straight from the Bible each week, and the young people particularly seemed to enjoy this. I might just



add a note here that Monson Academy, even though a very small school, had been known throughout the state as a great athletic power. Since that time, the high school has closed and the young people are transported to another community.

The attendance more than doubled in the church, in fact my mother was told it became three times as large during the time that she ministered there. I'm only pointing this out to give God the glory for the great things He has done. Mother said that people from both denominations were very friendly, not only with her but with each other. Baptist and Congregationalist were united there in quite an early ecumenical outreach. Finances improved to such an extent that they were able to paint the outside of both churches and also redecorate both. Both Baptist and Congregationalist must have agreed on the colors to use. My mother says that best of all, many accepted Christ as Lord and Savior and are faithful Christians to this day.

One of the meetings that was held in Monson that stands out in her mind was held by Reverend Les Christie, who at that time was on the state staff serving as director of evangelism. She mentions what a great blessing all of the church received from his ministry there.

There are many more things that could be mentioned about Monson, but in order to give a thumbnail sketch of each church, it is time to move on. My mother, feeling that her work was finished, accepted a call to Mechanic Falls and resigned the Federated Church in Monson.

The next stop for Reverend Ruth, as she was so often called by the church people that she had the privilege of pastoring, was Mechanic Falls. This church was in a

very difficult position financially and the parsonage was so poor and very cold. It seemed as if no man would go there to accept the challenge. My mother said she knew she really needed the help of the Lord when she accepted that call.

The senior deacon and chairman of the board happened to take a real liking to her. When she told them that they must get rid of the parsonage and buy another, they said, "All right, if you sell it, we will agree with what you say." Everyone was surprised because they had said they would never be able to sell the parsonage. (That just shows that church members can really change their minds.) All the members gladly voted to sell. That no doubt went down as a red letter day in the history of that church. Mother said she had never sold anything in her life, but she decided to put an ad in the paper. Soon a man and his wife came to look at the house and simply said they would like to buy it if they could have it in thirty days. By the way, they were going to make apartments out of the old house. It was large and could be divided into different units. After agreeing to these terms, and noting that many, many prayers were answered, they found a lovely house. As money by that time was coming in so well, they voted to buy that place as the new parsonage. They had a lovely dedication service, and everyone in the church seemed very happy about these transactions.

The congregation increased and several accepted Christ as Lord and Savior. Finances were in good condition so mother decided it was time to move. I might state here that mother has told me that all of the churches that she pastored, she honestly feels were in much better condition when she left than when she came. She certainly had many gifts and a great deal of

ability that was used to put churches on their feet, that they might have a greater outreach for the things of Christ.

Her next pastorage took her to the town of Norridgewock, Maine. As you remember, Monson was a Federated church, and because Norridgewock was also a Federated church of American Baptist and Congregationalists, it was the desire of the Baptist Executive Minister and the Congregational Superintendent to have mother take this church. She had the experience working with these two groups in Monson and had succeeded and I presume from what she has said, that Norridgewock seemed to be ready-made for her.

In trying to be honest in evaluating the churches she served, she said the church was really greatly divided. Very little Christian love, as far as she could ascertain, was manifest there. To really complicate the situation, the Baptists sat on one side and the Congregationalists on the other side. It seems that the division was largely due to a disagreement about a new school building that had been constructed. However, God moved in and gave my mother the wisdom that she needed. "If a man lacks wisdom, let him ask of God." My mother asked, and received the wisdom she needed as the lady pastor of this troubled church.

Almost immediately she organized a couples club, and people who had not spoken to each other for some time began talking again and Christian love began to shine through. Mother organized a youth group. She always seemed to have a special way of dealing with young people and influencing their lives. In this group she had forty high school young people. One of the things that was greatly needed was an improvement in

the music. My mother started looking around and found directors for a youth, junior and cherub choir. The church began to fill up and the Lord began to work upon the hearts of the people. Many accepted Christ as Lord and Savior and are about the Father's business even to this day.

Mother never seemed to be afraid to spend the money to buy these nice things for the churches that she pastored. A new organ was purchased, and the Sunday School rooms were redecorated. Mother, in her wisdom, never stressed denominations but the importance of accepting Christ as Lord and Savior, and showing within one's life His spirit of love.

Everyone in town (most of the towns that my mother pastored in were quite small) seemed to know whatever happened. Everyone began to think we had a friendly church and people within the church began to feel more friendly toward other churches.

During five years of the ministry in Norridgewock, my mother also served the Smithfield Baptist Church, which was located several miles away, Sunday nights. This not only gave her one church but two to nurture in the things of the Lord during most of her ministry in Norridgewock. The night service at Smithfield was held after the youth group met in Norridgewock. One thing that stood out in this church was the fact, as far as my mother knew, that it had never been redecorated. She said it looked very dismal indeed. In a period of time the money was raised to have this job done and the people were very happy to see their church take on a new look.

The Vacation Bible School stands out in her mind as being very successful. Because of this the church, which did not have a Sunday School, started one. The

church prospered, first spiritually by some accepting Christ as Lord and Savior and secondly it prospered financially.

She completed seven years in this church and was given a call to stay another two years. She really intended to do this but shortly afterwards, the phone rang and the Area minister said he really wished she would go to Buckfield. Three times he called my mother and said if she didn't go there, the church would close. She really didn't want to leave Norridgewock because of the way the Lord had blessed the work, but finally said she would supply for one Sunday.

The first Sunday in Buckfield, my mother tells that she and Dad arrived before it was time for church. For some reason she suggested that they drive up to the cemetery. There she remembers offering a prayer that went something like this, "Lord, I never expect to see these people again, so please help me to speak as a dying woman to dying people." Then they went to the church and mother says God helped her to preach. They held a business meeting and extended a call for her to become the pastor. She said, "I will think and pray about it."

While they were there, they looked over the parsonage and found it not properly heated. She finally told the Buckfield people that she would come if they agreed to put a new furnace in the parsonage. Mother says it really meant quite a sacrifice to her and Dad both, but they felt that they would do it for Christ's sake.

It was forty below zero (that's cold even for Maine) the day after they arrived in Buckfield. Mother says she almost froze in that cold parsonage. The trustees had not put in the new furnace. There is nothing so dreadful as telling mother you will do something and not to do it.

I guess you would have to say that she felt as a woman scorned.

She promptly called all the officers of the church to meet with her, in the parsonage, on Sunday night. (I wonder deep down in her heart if she hoped it would be forty below that night.) When the officers had gathered themselves together, she told them she was going to leave. They said, "But you have just arrived. She told them that she knew this, but they had not kept their word concerning the purchase of a new furnace. She recalls that one of the trustees spoke up and assured her they would have it put in by spring. She had gone there in November and told them that she couldn't freeze until spring. At that time, the choir director spoke up and asked if mother would like to live in her mother's home until spring. She said her mother was spending the winter in California. Mother tells me she said that would be lovely, not even knowing what the house would be like. It turned out to be a very beautiful home and very up to date. She even recalls one of the missionary speakers by the name of Reverend Theodore Bubeck, saying as they had dinner together, "What a beautiful parsonage you have, you certainly should never move."

The new furnace was finally installed in the old parsonage and the move was made there in April. Mom always said that parsonage had spooks. After awhile, the family agreed with her, as it seemed one of the doors kept opening and closing. Mother is very quick to add that God kept everyone safe from all evil.

She was very happy and overjoyed when many accepted Christ as Lord and Savior and became active workers within the church. I need to insert here that many churches that were not self-supporting, received

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missionary money from Convention headquarters to carry on the work. Buckfield, for the first time in its history, became self-supporting and was no longer dependent upon others to carry on the local work. Several members of the church became tithers. Several who seemed to be quite well to do, had not been too liberal in their giving, until this time at least.

Mother said one elderly gentleman had been bossing the entire congregation for years. She had reminded them in a business meeting that in an American Baptist Church, the majority rules. Mother was not afraid to speak from the pulpit, in the parsonage, or in a business meeting when the need was there.

During her time at this church, new Sunday School rooms were added and a fellowship hall. A youth group was organized. Several young people have said they were greatly helped by my Mother's ministry. Mother said that she just had to mention that an up-to-date bathroom was installed in the parsonage (well heated by the new furnace, I hope).

PASTORATES IN NEW YORK AND  
PENNSYLVANIA

After she had served approximately thirty-two years preaching the gospel in Maine, she began to feel that she needed to apply to another state. She applied to New York state and received a call to Phelps, New York to a very small church in a country town called Orleans.

Going from Maine to look at these two churches in New York, mother particularly remembers what a terrible blizzard she had to go through. After arriving safely and spending some time there, she decided to accept the call they extended. The people there, she mentions, were very, very faithful, working and praying people, especially she says, in the Phelps church. One poor young man in the church who had never known a mother's or father's love, told Mom that she was just like a Mother to him. Mother served on the field, in her new state, for three years. Several young people and adults accepted Jesus Christ. The Sunday School attendance increased in both churches. During her time there, finances came in quite well in both places. The Phelps church was redecorated. The church put in a new ceiling, built a new kitchen and bought two new furnaces. The decorations on the outside of the church were painted.



She liked the town of Phelps real well. She said everyone was very friendly to her including the Catholic Priest. (I wonder what he thought of the one I so often call Reverend Mother.) A woman preacher must have really been quite a shock.

Several Sundays the drive from Phelps to Orleans was made in terrible snow storms and was quite dangerous. God in His mercy took care of Mother. At the end of three years she felt her work was finished and told the area supervisor that she would prefer to pastor only one church.

The next church on Reverend Ruth's itinerary, was the American Baptist Church in Athens, Pennsylvania. This church was just across the New York state line. Through some particular arrangement it fell within the jurisdiction of the New York State Churches. The thing that impressed my mother most there was the parsonage. She said in all her years of ministry, this probably was the very best she had ever lived in. I presume this meant not only in her ministry but in her childhood. The attendance in this church increased a great deal. People started coming who had seldom attended church before and before long the church was full. Sunday School attendance increased and even at this age she had a very active youth group. During the time that mother pastored in Athens, fifteen persons accepted Christ and became active members of the church. Giving increased and they were able to build new Sunday School rooms and an up-to-date kitchen was installed. Mother was still a good furnace woman, and a large new furnace was installed to heat the church and parsonage. Mother has told me the former furnace was not safe. It seems to me, as I've talked with her about

the various pastorates, that one of the furnace companies should present her with an award as the pastor who really knew how to see that every church had plenty of heat. The sanctuary in this church was also redecorated.

Dad happened to have a particularly good position in this town with Ingersoll Rand Company. The only reason I mention this is to say that he often had to work until midnight or as late as 2:00 A.M. in the morning. Mother says that one night she heard the front door bell and thought it must be Dad. She says she started to open the door but instead looked at the clock and knew that he couldn't possibly be home for at least fifteen minutes. Instead of opening the door, she called the police. When the officer came, he found that someone had been trying to break in. Mother thanked God for His constant care over her.

At this point in her life she had become very tired and suffered a severe kidney infection. She felt the time had really come for her to retire. She felt she must resign the burden of the church. She said even then she had to urge one of the deacons to accept the resignation and Dad to second the motion. Four years at Athens had come to an end and mother retired.

She said that she really missed God's work, and after talking with the area supervisor, he suggested that she supply at Oneonta, New York.

At the age of sixty-eight, mother accepted a call to serve as interim pastor of the River Street Baptist Church in Oneonta, New York. Mother said that Oneonta was such a lovely city, but very, very cold and that there was plenty of snow in the winter. When they arrived at this church, and became acquainted with the peo-

ple, they found they had some very faithful men and women workers. During the time that mother was there, several united with the church. Two were baptized after accepting Christ as Lord and Savior and one united by letter. Even at age sixty-eight, she was able to master the kids. I guess you are only as old as your spirit. Mother thought young and had a good youth group. The Sunday School started to show marked improvement.

Mother got into a little difficulty here when one of the lady members told the young man, who was serving as superintendant, that he could do this no longer because he was a member of another church. What this lady member failed to realize was that he was intending to transfer his letter in a short period of time.

Mother said they had some wonderful happy times of fellowship in the church, and at the fellowship suppers which were served each month. The parsonage was large and quite cold. My mother, who seemed to be an expert on the installation of a new furnace for almost every church, had one installed there.

She recalls that before moving in someone had broken into the parsonage and had taken parts from the gas water heater. Dad went down to clean up the cellar and was overcome by the escape of gas. God spared his life from this ordeal and they were able to continue serving there.

The former pastor of this church had bought a home in Oneonta and he and his wife were very kind to mother. She mentions with great joy, that the ministers and members in that area were very, very friendly.

During the time that she was there she was able to attend the National Convention in Minneapolis. Just as a

side light I want to mention that while she was there I helped her celebrate her seventieth birthday. We had dinner that night in the Hotel Leamington with a cake and all. It was just beautiful. There happened to be a musical group appearing there from California, who sang Happy Birthday to my mother. She attended most all of the minister's meetings and spoke on missionary outreach at several churches.

At the end of two years she felt her work was finished in that church, and resigned. A farewell supper was served, a gift was presented with which she bought a watch that she still wears to this day. Mother says that she really felt this was her last church and she would only supply pulpits from now on. She has told me that she really had no regrets going into retirement.

## *Chapter 6*

### PEOPLE, PLACES AND INFLUENCES IN THE MINISTRY

During anyones lifetime, even though I am certain that heredity plays a great role, we cannot neglect the role that people and places play. Being a pastor, I personally know the difficulty of living in somewhat of a fishbowl. It is difficult in the ministry as a man, how much more so it must have been as a woman, living for the most part in small communities.

Obviously, a number of influences will be left out, I can only endeavor to set forth those things that mother has told me. In this portion, I wish to list a number of men and woman who made a real contribution to my mother's life during the time that she was privileged to preach the gospel. Because it is so easy to dwell on the negative, I am not going to deal with this to any great extent. I prefer to look at the positive, trusting that this

will help to encourage others. I personally believe that the ministry is the greatest calling that a person can possibly have. I wish to do what the popular song of yesteryear stated, "Accentuate the Positive."

The first person I would like to mention is Reverend Dr. John Pendleton, who was a very dear and close friend of my mother. He was executive minister of the state of Maine during a number of her early years in God's Work. She was greatly encouraged by him and I'm certain in those early years she really needed it. The encouragement that he gave to her was that she could go to churches where there had been a great deal of trouble and that she would be able to bind up the wounds and bring a great deal of Christian love to that congregation. She said she always felt he would be there to really help in time of need. He helped her get the opportunity and would always tell them she was just the one to build the church up. There is no question that an executive minister must be very diplomatic. She remembers him as having this particular ability. If I might mention in passing, my grandmother when I was growing up always told me to handle people with kid gloves. Possibly my mother was told the same thing and diplomacy was something that she particularly appreciated. She said Dr. Pendleton had a great deal of courage in his ministry.

Another person my mother remembers with such great fondness was a dear lady in her first pastorate, that everyone called "Grammy Miller." She was eighty years of age when mother arrived in Perham. A former school teacher, she was at that time still teaching, but her teaching was in a Sunday School Class. She had a very clear mind and she fed mother spiritually in that

class. Mother also said that everytime she visited her house, she fed her there too, as previously mentioned. One of the other impressions that always stood in my mother's mind was the fact that she always attended prayer service. Beyond this she showed a great spirit of love. I would say the thing that really thrilled mother was that "Grammy Miller" always said mother was a great preacher. Not going into any of the details, mother particularly admired her for her bravery in her personal life.

Reverend Thomas Brindley, area minister, was a very loyal friend. He helped mother by approving her ordination. Just for a point of observation, I wonder how popular that was at that time? He helped her to get into the Ministers and Missionary Benefit Board of the American Baptist Churches. He helped mother a great deal by suggesting her name to various churches. Mother admired his courage a great deal that in spite of health problems he was always on the job.

The Reverend Ralph Daley, one of the young men in the Canton church, who is now a missionary in Alaska, inspired mother a great deal. Even though he was suffering from rheumatic fever, he told mother that the Lord would help him and heal him so that he could go to serve the Lord. Ralph always said that he approved of women preachers. He has shown his approval even to this day by being a faithful friend.

Reverend Eugene Cram, area minister of Western Maine always asked my mother to take the run-down churches. The reason that he did this, is because he said she would build them up. To my mother, this was all the encouragement she needed. He always seemed to have the way of persuading her to undertake this task. One of

the things that my mother has mentioned that she particularly liked was that Gene seemed to be very fond of both boys. One of the instances that really stood out in my mother's mind was in the town of Buckfield, shortly after moving there, she threatened to leave because they had not put a new furnace in when they had said they would do so. Reverend Cram really stood with my mother in this difficult situation. Mother said that when the church became self-supporting, he expressed his appreciation.

Reverend Ivan Cash, area minister in New York State, gave my mother a very cordial welcome when she moved to that area from Maine. He was very helpful and she illustrates his great help in this way. As you look back on it I'm sure that you can smile about it but during the time that it happened, I imagine to my parents it wasn't at all humorous. Mother resigned one church in order to accept the call to another one. When she arrived on the field of her new church, the chairman of the board of deacons, publicly made the statement that the majority of the people in the church had not voted to call my mother and besides, he didn't believe in women ministers. He determined that they should vote on this very important matter again the next Sunday. Now I want to tell you, dear friends, that the chairman of the board of deacons in many Baptist churches has a great deal more authority than some of the executives in a large business. There may not be anything quite as nerve shattering as a deacon, especially when it is the chairman, on the rampage. Let me say before I am misunderstood, that I have known many, many wonderful consecrated men of God who have been willing to serve, but deacons in a Baptist church do have a great deal of



power. Mother, not knowing quite what to do and always being able to use the telephone, had the presence of mind to call Reverend Ivan Cash to come to the rescue. Keep in mind that the Reverend Ruth had already moved to this church and there could be no turning back, Ivan Cash said, "I'll be there." Not only that but he ended up presiding at the business meeting. Mother said he told the people in the meeting that they, the American Baptist New York State Churches, would never send them another minister if they voted not to keep her. The vote was to retain the pastor they had called. Mother notes that that deacon was never too active during her ministry there but as strange as it may seem, the deacon's daughter and his son-in-law were very, very faithful in that church. Reverend Cash also recommended mother for graduate study at Green Lake, Wisconsin with all expenses paid. He told mother that he was very pleased with her work in the church.

One of the other people who had a great influence on my mother's life, was Congressman Clifford MacIntire from Perham, Maine. He was one who gave my mother many words of encouragement and was very faithful in his attendance at the church services during the time he was there. Mother remembers him particularly as being honest and fearless, a man who was willing to speak the truth. Certainly this speaks very highly of him, and it is good to hear a public servant so highly recommended and remembered. Mother saw Clifford a number of times after leaving Perham. Just a short time ago he finished his earthly service.

Reverend Reed Blackstone, of another denomination, mother particularly admired because of his wonderful faith in the Lord and for his great belief in the healing

power of God. As I mentioned in another section, the time when I was suffering from polio, he prayed for my recovery. They were friends for many, many years.

Perhaps the person who is equally as well known as Clifford MacIntire, was Dr. Hilda Ives of the Congregational Church. She became a very close friend of mother. Dr. Ives became a Christian by reading the Gospel after the death of her husband. This came about because the minister who had the funeral service asked Hilda to read from the Scripture. She told him that she would do it. This pointed out to my mother how the Gospel can have a great influence on a person. Even though Dr. Ives was, I'm sure, very loyal to her denomination, she did not stress this but stressed the importance of accepting Christ as Lord and Savior. Perhaps of all the people that I have heard my Mother mention down through the years, there was none that was mentioned quite as often as Hilda Ives.

In the Buckfield Church there was a couple by the name of Mr. and Mrs. Bertrum Buck. Their great faith left a mark on my mother that she will never forget. Just before their daughter was killed in a tragic accident by falling off a load of hay, she had been baptized by me when I was home on vacation. This girl had requested as she came out of the water that the hymn "Rock of Ages" might be sung. One of the verses of this hymn contains the words, "As I draw this fleeting breath." Mother had said to me something like, "I don't understand why she wants this song." This girl was a young college student and she, it appeared, had her whole life before her. Perhaps she sensed that she was to receive an early promotion into the Kingdom of heaven. Mother has never forgotten this and the great

faith of this couple who surrendered their daughter into the arms of Christ.

One of the ladies that my mother remembers so well, lived in the town of Monson. Esther Pennington was so faithful in her friendship and words of encouragement. Monson was a town of many Swedish people and Esther was one of those gracious people who was not only faithful in friendship and words of encouragement, but sent in all that good food. The Swedish rolls and special treats helped to keep mother's calorie intake high. Esther not only was friendly but perhaps understood that many times the way to a pastor's heart, in this case was through her stomach!

Mother tells of one lady, whose name I will not mention, who became desperately ill. Mother felt led to see her. This woman who had been in a coma for quite a period of time for the first time was conscious of what was going on about her. When my mother arrived and was able to talk to her, she asked, "Will God ever forgive me for keeping my four daughters away from the church and never even allowing a hymn to be sung in the home?" Mother assured her that God would forgive her if she would simply ask Him to do this and that she would also need to ask for forgiveness and for Christ to save her. This she did. She began at once to pray for her daughters. All accepted Christ, made public confessions of their faith in Him, and were baptized and are witnesses for Him in the church today. Mother said this taught her in a way that perhaps she never understood before, how God answers prayer and that it is never too late to pray. To make this story of this woman's great faith, and that the "prayers of a righteous person availeth much," you need to know that this woman was dead in two weeks. The mercy of God had reached out

and hadn't only touched this dying woman, but saved her four daughters. Who can fathom the grace of God? My mother came to know that truly as long as there is breath and the spirit of life abides, that it is never too late.

A missionary couple had a great influence on my mother's life. This couple attended college with mother and influenced her greatly there. Harry and Ethel Brown served for many years in Africa with the American Baptist Churches mission program. Mother was influenced by Ethel while in college to take time for devotions. Another great influence which came about down through the years was when this couple was on furlough. They would visit and exchange memories of the past and bright hopes for the future. My mother mentions that the thing that stood out in her mind about this very devoted couple was that they were able to put their children in God's hands, when the time arrived for first one, then the other to be educated in the States. Harry and Ethel remained on the field to serve. What a sacrifice to make! To give your own life, and then give of the one you loved. Reverend and Mrs. Harry Brown have been nearly life-long friends of my mother.

I said at the very beginning of this, I was not going to be negative, but I just have to mention two sisters in one of the churches who were extremely negative, but influenced my mother for the positive. Mother says these two girls were against absolutely anything that cost money. Mother, who is not prone to speak against anyone, has told me that quite frankly they were trouble makers. Isn't it wonderful how the Lord puts us in contact with people who will make us grow spiritually! These two sisters taught my mother a very valuable

lesson that needs to be learned, and that was that she must stand for what is best for the church in spite of who and what the opposition is.

I'm certain that there are many people that should have been included in this list such as Dr. Pendleton's wife who told my mother not to tell her troubles to the church, they have enough of their own. The retired Congregational minister in Phelps, who was so kind, the businessmen in various towns who were so friendly, and many, many more who down through the years gave words of encouragement.

Because this is about a Baptist, I thought I ought to let my mother vote on what places and conditions influenced her the most. For the place, her vote went to Perham, Maine. For the town with greatest amount of loyal friends, Buckfield, Maine got the nod. For the things that disturbed her the most, she said that the snow had a very depressing effect on her. Remembering that she served mostly in the smaller communities, she said that they seemed so lonely and desolate at night. She always liked to see the lights on in the stores in the evening. Distance seemed to mean very little to her. She would always be happy to drive for a visit to the city. One thing that mother has told me that I never realized before was she just didn't like the woods. This seemed quite strange to me until I remembered that she was a city girl, called to do God's work in the country. People, places, and things all influence us more than we can comprehend. Many people, places, and things influenced my mother and there is no question in my mind that she influenced them.

## *Chapter 7*

### MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

Certainly this work would not be complete without including marriage and family life. A family plays such a vital part in the life of a minister, probably because they are more in the public eye than perhaps any other profession. I will not set forth my feelings in this section of being a minister's son. I can imagine that ministers' sons and daughters feel that they are really in the fishbowl, but you can conceive what it would be like if Mama was the preacher and not Dad! Being a fourth generation preacher, I have heard tales of the ministry that would certainly make truth really sound stranger than any fiction ever written. It is beyond my comprehension and real understanding, even though I lived in the situation, what a man must go through married to the pastor of the church that he attends.

Mother's family consists of husband, Chester Virgil Jackson, born Montville, Maine, August 23, 1904, son of Hollis and Charlotte Jackson, farmer and store owner. Sons, E. Marvin Jackson, born Boston, Massachusetts,

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October 19, 1927 and Paul L. Jackson, born Presque Isle, Maine, December 30, 1933.

The family was together in the following towns: Perham, South Montville, The Bar Mills and Hollis Center churches, Canton, Monson, Mechanic Falls and Buckfield. During the time of the Canton pastorate I enlisted in the Merchant Marines, but returned to finish high school in Monson. I attended college while the family was in Mechanic Falls. My brother, Paul, was home basically through a good part of the Norridgewock days, then left to attend college. We were only in Buckfield during vacation time or other special occasions.

All of these communities were quite small and we, of course, were known by everyone as the preacher's kids. My brother and I had our own favorite communities and of course probably got along better in some than in the others. Moving from town to town did have its advantages in the fact that there was always something new.

I would want to mention a little bit of family life and perhaps I need to tell you a little about each one of us. If there is one virtue that Dad had above all others it would be the virtue of patience. He always was willing to serve in any place that God would lead us to. The work that he did in the different communities basically were as follows: Lumber Company, Slate quarry, Highway construction, and for Ingersol Rand & Company in their stock room. He also painted. Dad has been called the perfect preacher's husband! He was active in the church men's club, served as a deacon, as an usher, and also sang in the choir. It was said of him, if there ever was a Christian who lived the life, it was this man. He was always willing to help in any way in regard to

the work at the church and at home. He was well liked and got along exceptionally well with the church people. I can imagine that he must have, many times, refrained from speaking up about certain things. He also provided wheels for the kids, his own, and to others.

I was active in church, merely at that time because I wanted to eat. It might have been, no church — no eat. Even though I cannot exactly get my mother to admit it, it seems that I recall her saying that I was the best baby in the world and the worst teenager, and that Paul was the worst baby you ever saw and the best teenager. My mother delights in telling me of some of the things I said as a very small child. One time, as the offering plate was being passed, I held my offering over the plate and did not drop it in for a moment; finally, I said in a loud voice, "Might just as well put it in, it will go to Mommy anyhow." Another time mother tells me that as she started to pray and evidently, in my mind at least, had prayed too long already, I said, "That's enough, Mommy, say amen." At one church supper I told the people who would listen to me, that it was nice to be where I could get something good to eat. My mother tells me that as a child I was sweet. That might have been, but I certainly seemed to have an awful lot to say.

As a small child I developed the dreaded disease of polio. Mother tells me that I was not really able at that time to say Jesus but used to pray over and over again, "Deedee, please give me a perfect leg." The polio had left me with a paralysis in my leg. Incidentally, I was completely healed and show no after-effects from this crippling disease. During the time that I had polio, a Christian Adventist, Reid Blackstone, anointed me with



oil and prayed over me. The doctor had said I would have to go to the Children's hospital that next day as the paralysis was spreading. God undertook in a marvelous way and the healing began to take place. I am going to, in a later chapter tell of my interpretations of my life in the parsonage but, I mention these for things under marriage and family life to give you an understanding of my mother's life in the ministry.

One time I was caught throwing rocks at a neighbor's house and had to pay all damages out of my savings. Mother tells me that on my first day of school, I said I would never go to school again because the teacher had said that she wouldn't let me eat until recess. I did go back and was a very good student for the first three years of school. After that, at least in my own interpretation, even though it seems I did skip one grade and then stayed back another grade, I was a very poor student in high school. In the very beginning of my Junior year, after doing better in my sophomore year than at any other time up to that point, I left to enter the Merchant Marines. Finally, I came back to graduate from Monson Academy and then to college a year after graduating from high school.

One of the instances that stands out in my mother's mind, which I do not remember, happened when I was six years of age. My brother, Paul, only four weeks of age, had developed pneumonia. I had been out playing and came in to ask, "How is my baby brother"? My mother told me an angel was coming to take him to heaven. The doctor had told her there was no hope for his life. I said, "No, where does it say He'll give an angel to take care of you?" Mother found the 91st Psalm, then I said, "Now, Paul, I'm going to pray for you." Mother said that I prayed for about fifteen

minutes. She has told me that I prayed not really like a child. I prayed that Paul would live to preach, then I stood up and said, "You're going to be all right now, I have to go out and finish my snowman." Paul recovered and the doctor said, "It must have been a higher power." It fascinates me that Paul always said that he wanted to be a minister and never varied from this. At this writing, he is pastor of the First Baptist Church of Millinocket, Maine.

I consider my call to the ministry to really have come to me when I was nine years of age. At nine I had walked the aisle of the old Ruggle Street Baptist Church in Boston, Massachusetts to give my life to the Lord. I must say, however, that I did everything not to heed the call and was a very rebellious child and teenager. God moves in mysterious ways! Because I walked the aisle of that church, an elderly gentlemen also walked the aisle and gave his life to the Lord. The pastor called on him and he said, "If that little boy had the courage, I was going to do it too." That man was dead in a few weeks. The mercy of God is beyond comprehension. I was a leader in church and in many ways in the communities that we lived in. I honestly feel within my heart that I was more grief than I was help to my mother's ministry.

When it comes to my brother Paul, I seem to be hearing a different story from my mother now, than I remember hearing a number of years ago. Now mother says Paul was a very happy baby even though it really seems that I remember her saying that I was the good baby and he was the bad one. Paul and I were separated by many conditions. Paul grew up really in an entirely different age than I did. The second world war started

when I was about twelve. It probably is difficult to comprehend today, but jobs were really plentiful. In fact I drove logs on the Soco River when I was about fourteen during one summer and was paid the magnificent sum of forty cents an hour. I believe it was the next summer that I was shoveling coal for sixty cents an hour, six days a week, making thirty-six dollars a week. The reason that I point this out is to say that even though I was quite young I was quite affluent and probably grew up all too fast. Paul was not, or did not seem to be the real adventuresome type that I was. He was very steady, in school he was a good student all the way through. He never varied from the desire to become a minister. To me he always seemed to be quite a nice boy compared to his older brother.

By the time I graduated from high school, I had already been in Europe and parts of the Caribbean. Paul had never had the experiences and I guess seemed rather tame to me. I do want to mention that as a very young boy, even though he had completely recovered from pneumonia, he had a much more serious setback when he was hit, while crossing the street with my mother, by a mail truck. Even though he recovered completely from this, he was surely for a number of years, not really too rugged. I also remember the doctor telling my folks he had a very slight heart problem. We were not really close, even though we were growing up in the same family. People have told us down through the years that we are as different as day and night. I guess our ministries would perhaps bear this out. We are about as far apart as you can get in the continental United States. He pastors in Millinocket, Maine, at the First Baptist Church, and I pastor the First Baptist Church, Orange, California.

Paul was well liked and was able to express himself quite well. Mother tells that one Sunday he asked his Sunday School teacher which was it worse to be, a hypocrite or a vagabond? She said, "I believe it would be a hypocrite." He said, "I guess I'll be a vagabond." Strange isn't it that Paul has done very little traveling, but I want to tell you he is not a hypocrite. He decided to marry at eight years of age, even told mother that she could live with them because his girlfriend at the time said that it would be all right.

Paul always loved to stay up late at night. One night, I'm not exactly sure what time it was, he was told to go to bed. Somehow he had come into the ownership of a couple pieces of furniture in his room, perhaps they were a gift, I don't remember the details. He said, "All right I am going to leave home and take my furniture." After some hurried discussion he said, "Let me compromise and stay up until eight thirty." I'm not sure if he got his wish.

Mother tells me that even though he never varied from his desire to preach, his real decision to enter the ministry came about the age of fourteen.

It is very difficult to describe life in the parsonage. I'm sure that every parsonage was different, just as every town was different. I do not want to be negative, nor do I want to be too positive. There is just no way to live the life of a preacher's kid vicariously. It has to be experienced to really appreciate the joys, and yet the heartaches too. It seems like I have heard from enough ministers who have grown up in enough parsonages all over the United States, that of any family you could be born in, there is nothing like being a part of the pastor's family and living in a house that the church provides.

What made it a home was the fact that mother was a

full time preacher, but a full time mother also. She was a housewife and did take time to be an excellent cook. Somehow, it always seemed to me, even to this day, that Paul always got the biggest piece of meat. We used to eat our main meal as a rule, with the exception of Sunday, at night. The dinner table seemed to be a real happy time when we could relax and get ready for the evening's activities, whatever they might be. We had good food, and as a rule had plenty of it. I used to drive everyone crazy I imagine, I must have been a true Californian, because I didn't want cole slaw, I wanted a tossed salad, even in the middle of the winter. Lettuce in Maine, I believe, was more expensive then than it is today in California. We all ate well and mother received many compliments in her cooking.

A real part of our family life was someone I loved a great deal. Grammy Hodges, who lived with us for a number of years, when she was not staying with my uncle Jack in Massachusetts. Grammy was absolutely full of love, loved the Lord with all her heart, and lived to be in her nineties. I might just add here that grammy had a stroke shortly before she went to be with the Lord. She kept calling for someone, trying to say their name. Mother said, "Is it Marvin?" She nodded her head yes. I was in Boston at the time. Grammy had had many attacks and I wasn't going to go see her, but a friend of mine influenced me to go for which I'll always be eternally grateful. I got home in time to see Grammy before she passed on. I remember I always used to put my hand on Grammys's head and pray over her. Perhaps the reason she wanted to see me was because so many in the family said that I reminded them of grandfather, her husband,. When Grammy died it was a beautiful,

and yet sad experience in the parsonage. Her doctor was very impressed by her great faith in God.

We, of course, down through the years, had a varied assortment of cats and dogs. One dog was our favorite, his name was Skippy.

I would say that people were always welcome at the parsonage, and we had quite an open house policy. Quite frankly, most of the parsonages had to be fixed up. They were, as a rule, in very, very poor shape. Unfortunately, too many members of the congregation had much better homes to live in. In New England it seemed to be that, at least the parsonages I was familiar with, left an awful lot to be desired. They seemed to find the biggest, oldest house in town and say, "Hey, that's a good place for the preacher to live." I am not trying to be critical or negative, I am just trying to tell it like it was. Certainly since those days, in many places, the conditions have improved a great deal. If you asked me, do I think that life in a parsonage was normal, I would have to say no; but I do honestly believe that this life, in a sense, did so toughen you that you were able to accept most any challenge. It could be in part why so many preachers' kids make good. The constant care of the Lord, the prayers of righteous people, and the knowledge that you are going to make it, certainly helps to make and to mold a strong character. I live in a parsonage now. Most of my ministry I have not lived in a parsonage. I along with, I'm sure many, many pastors would not vote to grow up in one, or to live in one, but I thank my Lord that God picked two boys out of that family, who spent so many years living in one after another, to preach the cross.

Paul and I were both active in the church. In my case

many times I was forced to be active much against my will. Church was something that was not questioned, it was simply something that we did. We were not asked, we were told. It was never too cold, never too wet. We were, I don't think hardly ever too sick or too busy to go to God's house. I wonder, if as a young child if I hadn't gone, would my folks have fed me. They believed in a lot of spiritual food.

We used to help with the housework such as doing the dishes, which I absolutely detest to this day. It would be one in a million wives who would never ask their husbands to help do the dishes. It's amazing how God works things out. Believe it or not, my wife likes to do the dishes and I can't ever recall her asking me to help.

I mentioned that we always seemed to be right next door to the church and it always seemed we were supposed to set a good example. People seemed to forget that we were human. We were a very late night family and really did enjoy a lot of fellowship together. We laughed about many of the places we lived in and still tell about our experience in Buckfield. We all agreed the house had spooks. It seemed that doors would open and close by themselves. Somewhere we had either heard the story or made it up that someone was murdered in that house. My wife has stayed there, of course not being a preacher's kid, she just doesn't realize how preacher's families need to have a story to tell about every place they have lived in.

There is so much more that I could mention in regard to our family life, but this one stands out in my mind and I suppose in everyone's mind that has moved a lot. It was the mixed emotions that kids feel when it's time to move to a new field. If you didn't get along with the

kids and didn't like the town, how sweet it would be to hear that it was time to saddle up the old car and move on. If you liked the place or didn't want to go, it could simply tear your heart out. As I got older, I began to realize or at least I feel I did at that time, to move as a preacher's kid wasn't like any other family moving into a new town. There were so many more adjustments to make, and it was really hard in so many ways. I think in order to be honest, I would have to say that my folks tried in every way to make it a happy family life. Later on, when I give my opinions of my childhood looked at in a different vein, I will be more candid about, "Mama was a Preacher." By having a family, God made it possible for her to go where she probably never would have been able to go, and God used her greatly in the various communities where we lived.



## *Chapter 8*

### AWARDS, RECOGNITIONS, AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

My Mother has always felt that the greatest recognition that she ever received in her life was when it was acknowledged that she met the qualifications to be ordained in the Gospel Ministry. Certainly in the 1920's there were very few women who were college graduates and fewer still who had the opportunity to enter in such a great field of service. It is hard for us who live today to realize what it must have been like in those days.

In our American Baptist Churches the local church must recommend the candidate for ordination and then the ordaining council must approve the candidate in order for the ordination to take place. I have talked to Mother about this great milestone in her life and as mentioned earlier, there certainly was opposition to this giant step. The opposition did not stem from any lack of qualifications but simply because she was a woman. I suppose, even today within the framework of our churches, there are many, on what they would consider to be spiritual grounds, who feel that a woman should not seek ordination. My personal feeling is that in Christ there is neither male nor female, and who are

we to determine upon whom God has placed His hand?

Mother was a pioneer in this field and as I have traveled a great deal, I have been to places that only those with hardy spirits would think of passing with their covered wagons. Our pioneers had to be men of great courage. As I think particularly of one place, Donner Pass, California, the thought crosses my mind that these people must have really been very tough to go through what they did. I feel that my Mother was a hardy pioneer.

Two top awards came my Mother's way when both her sons entered the ministry, both in the American Baptist Church no less. Another was seeing one of the young men who was converted under her ministry, become a missionary in Alaska. Down through the years other awards came her way, such as seeing a number of churches built up spiritually and financially, encouraging people and seeing them take on new life, and seeing people kept from suicide. These along with the all important fact that many came to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior were awards in a very real sense of the word.

I, personally, have felt that Mother was not recognized in the way that she should have been. One time she was told that she was going to be recommended for the Town & Country Award. I don't know all the details that were involved in regard to this but I know that was one of her great disappointments when she didn't receive this award. Her work with the churches in Maine and in the other places of service were certainly evident of the great gifts that God had given to her. It would seem to me, and I am writing only my opinion, that she was never really recognized, in perhaps the way and with

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the full honors, that she should have been. I need to mention that she was written up, more than once, in the Baptist Messenger, which is the Maine paper that covers the news of American Baptist Churches. She was also written up in the American Baptist Magazine, which is our National publication.

One of her great thrills in the latter years of her ministry was when she was pastoring in the church in Phelps, New York. She was selected to attend the graduate school at the American Baptist Assembly in Green Lakes, Wisconsin. Mother appreciated this wonderful opportunity and talks about it to this day.

She certainly is very thankful for the loyal friends that she has made, and kept in contact with, all of these years. That, along with the remark that one of the deacons referred to her as the "Miracle Woman", has helped to brighten her years in the ministry. I suppose every church that she was in awarded her with a number of gifts on special occasions such as birthdays and Christmas, as well as going away parties.

As my mother looks back on the years that have come and gone, it has given her a great deal of joy to realize that this was not man's call on her life, but God's call. She encouraged and strengthened the saints and in many communities left a lasting influence that has not been forgotten. She has told me of many of the people who stood out in her mind from those who were desperate, to those desperately searching. From the young man who is now a medical doctor to the woman who on her death bed she led to the Lord, she has received words of gratitude. I feel certain within my heart that the greatest reward will come when she stands before her Lord and Savior.

## *Chapter 9*

### MESSAGES BY REVEREND RUTH

My Mother always considered preaching to be her strongest point in the ministry. No work on her life would be complete without first quoting from how she prepared her sermons, and second, including her favorite sermons. It was a difficult decision to arrive at as to which really were her favorites and exactly how many to include. After forty-one years in the Gospel Ministry, and hundreds of sermons, it's quite difficult to narrow it down to just a few. The sermons that are included are at least the ones that stand out in her mind more than any others that she can recall. If I might be personal, I would like to state that Mother had a very analytical mind and was able to put together sermons in a very orderly fashion. I would say that her sermons were certainly apropos to the times and conditions that she faced in the communities where she lived. Mother's sermons were not of great length but were long enough to include help for those that she ministered to week after week. Among the members of her congregation were the average people that you would find in most any community. I believe that her sermons were really appreciated and helped many people down through the years.

In asking her how she prepared her sermons, she has told me this was the method that she used. First, she would always pray that she would have Christ's message for that particular Sunday and be only a voice speaking for Him. In her sermon preparation she tried to be faithful in putting aside two hours four mornings a week, from nine to eleven, for study and she said above all for prayer. During this period of time she would study God's Word and try to find out everything it had to say on the subject or person whom she had decided to preach on.

After studying from God's Word, she had the habit of reading all that she could find in different commentaries and other books on the particular subject. She would also often take time in the evenings. She tells me that she particularly remembers when it was 2 a.m. one Sunday morning before she finally had the message to deliver that she felt God would have her give.

She always liked to find suitable illustrations and would search very diligently for them. She felt that illustrations were remembered and made the messages much more interesting to those in attendance. Mother always insisted on calling what I insist is a sermon, a message. The reason she did this is because she always tried to remember that she needed to be a messenger for Christ Jesus.

Mother has told me that her messages were only about twenty minutes long. (As a young boy they often seemed a lot longer than that to me.) She said the reason she tried to keep her messages at twenty minutes was because she felt that was long enough and she was impressed by one minister who had told her that the best sermon he had ever heard was only fifteen

minutes in length. Mother did not preach the message before she entered the pulpit, as is the custom of a number of ministers. She was ready and she has said that God helped her to deliver them.

It was Mother's custom to wear a robe when she preached. She said that the members of the different churches didn't like her to wear a black robe except at funeral services. During the summer she would wear a white robe and a maroon and a beautiful light blue one for the winter.

Mother always felt that God gave her the messages that she brought and that she was a voice speaking for Him. She brought a number of different kinds of messages, some of course, were on people mentioned in God's Word, others were on different subjects such as, "Conquerors through Christ." Many others were on different passages of Scripture. She always preached from the word of God and has told me how very thankful she was for the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Every minister has a different approach as to how they deal with the closing moments of the service. Mother, at the close of the message or during the singing of the last hymn, when she felt led, would ask people to come forward and accept Christ as Lord and Savior. This, of course, is quite traditional and the custom in many Baptist Churches and is referred to simply as the invitation.

Mother had a special way of giving a second invitation and she would do this quite often. After the service was over, she would stand at the door, and while shaking hands with those who were filing out she would say, if she felt that the Holy Spirit was leading her to do so, "You would like to accept Christ this morning wouldn't

you?" Many times my mother has told me that the person she spoke to would say, "How did you know that?" She then would reply, "The Holy Spirit led me to speak to you." That person or persons would then, with my mother instructing them what to do, go forward to the altar and kneel to pray for Christ to come into their lives. Mother tells me that today there are many faithful Christians, who are active workers in a number of different churches where she was pastor, who accepted Christ when the Holy Spirit led her to speak to them.

I am sure that sometimes, no doubt, the sermons came quickly, and others there was a time of real struggle, but with forty-one years of preaching, Mother said that Christ never failed to help and direct her. She said without Him she could have done nothing. To Him give thanks and praise, for "with God all things are possible."

I trust that the sermons that follow will be a blessing to those who read them. I do not feel that a written sermon can really express in such a real way as one that is delivered, with all the force and power of the speaker. I trust that these messages, as Mother wants them called, will help you and perhaps draw you closer to our wonderful Savior and to help you to understand a little better the lady preacher they called "Reverend Ruth."

## Chapter 9

### MESSAGES BY REVEREND RUTH

#### VICTORY THROUGH CHRIST

Galatians 2:20 New English Bible "I have been crucified with Christ, the life I now live is not my life, but the life which Christ lives in me."

I Corinthians 15:57 "Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

#### *Introduction*

On May 13, 1940, Sir Winston Churchill spoke these words in The House of Commons, "You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: it is VICTORY, VICTORY at all costs, VICTORY in spite of terror, however long and hard the road may be."

We have been listening to the hymns sung at Sir Winston's funeral service. We remember the hymn, "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord." We also heard that beautiful hymn, "Fight the good fight with all thy might, Christ is thy strength, and Christ thy right."

We were reminded of the words of the Apostle Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." We also thought of the words of our text, "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." I Cor. 15:57

First of all this morning, I am going to ask you to meet the Apostle Paul, but meet him when he was Saul, (so called) before his conversion.



A. What did he look like? We do not have a portrait of Paul, but there is a large medallion from the Roman cemetery of Domitilla, as well as a glass dish in the British Museum, depicting Paul and Peter. From these, and certain ancient writings, we can visualize Paul or Saul with a fair amount of certainty. He was less than five feet tall and was broad shouldered. Early athletics had hardened his well-conditioned body. He had fair complexion, a long aquiline nose which suggested decision, and an impelling manner. There was a zeal which flashed and flared in his enormous eyes.

B. Now we see him on the road to Damascus. He has a sword in his hand and a troop of soldiers at his command. His purpose is to pursue all Christians who had fled from Jerusalem to Damascus, take them captive, and bring them back to Jerusalem. He was seething with zeal, determined to wipe out Christianity.

C. He is now nearing Damascus. Suddenly he falls to the ground, a blinding light from Heaven shines upon him, and he hears a compassionate voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" Saul replies, "Lord, who are you?" And the answer comes, "I am Jesus whom you persecute. It is hard for you to kick against the pricks." Now Saul replies, "Lord, what will you have me to do?"

Broken at last he bowed his head  
Forgetting all himself, and said  
Whatever comes "Thy will be done"  
And in that moment peace was won.

At last, Saul had surrendered his life to Jesus. He had been under conviction when Stephen was martyred. As they were stoning him, Saul heard Stephen say, "Lord,

lay not this sin to their charge," and his face was as the face of an angel. There was something these Christians had which he needed. And so Saul was born again, he became a new man in Jesus Christ, completely transformed by power Divine. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Jesus said, "Arise and go to the Street called Straight and it shall be told thee what thou must do." So Saul becomes Paul, the devoted follower of Jesus Christ.

*Christ Gives Him the Victory  
in the Hour of Distress*

Christ sent to him a sincere friend, a devoted Christian. Paul was blind, but Jesus didn't forget him in this sore trial. Annanias came to him at the Lord's bidding, laid his hand and upon his head and prayed over him. Oh friends, Jesus never forgets us. In the hour of distress He comes to us or sends someone to help us. So, Paul received his sight, and was baptized.

*Christ Gave Paul the Victory  
in the Hour of Danger*

If you had been in Damascus on a certain dark night you would have seen two men carrying a basket. At times a pear or an orange slipped from this basket, which seemed to be full of fruit. Paul's life was in great danger because he had been teaching and preaching that Jesus was The Christ, the Messiah. He was very

persuasive, and people were beginning to believe him. The Pharisees were furious and decided to have him killed. Annanias and certain other Christians heard of the plot, and felt they must save him. So, on this dark night they put Paul in the large basket, covered him over with fruit, and went out to the end of the city wall. There they tied ropes to either side of the basket and they let Paul down over the wall. He waved farewell to his Christian friends and when he put his feet on the ground, thanked Christ for taking care of him in this hour of danger. Paul was to face many such hours of danger but always the Lord took care of him, in life and death. "A Wonderful Savior is Jesus our Lord."

### *Christ Gave Paul Victory Over His Doubts*

Paul did not go to Jerusalem at this time. He went to the desert of Arabia. And there a struggle began. You see, Paul had to find room in his thinking for the Cross. The cross had been to him the final and conclusive proof that Jesus was an imposter. But now that he knew Jesus to be the Son of God, he knew the cross must have been God's plan.

Then, Paul also faced what it would mean to his life personally if he continued to be a follower of Jesus. There would be a cross for him. Everything the world could offer was within his grasp; power, influence, and wealth. Paul sweat, as it were, great drops of blood as he fought these temptations. But Christ was with him and gave him the VICTORY. He could not say, "I live (i with a small letter) yet not i, i am crucified, crucified with CHRIST, CHRIST liveth in me."

*Christ Gave Him the VICTORY  
In the Hours of DISAPPOINTMENT*

After three years Paul went to the Christians in Jerusalem. He might have thought they would rejoice with him, over Christ's transforming power, but he was to meet with a sad disappointment. Everyone gave him the cold shoulder, everyone except good old Barnabas. And had it not been for Barnabas, Paul might have been lost to the Christian Church forever. You see, the Christians at the Jerusalem Church thought Paul was just putting on an act. Disappointed and hurt, he stole like a wounded animal back to Tarsus, his home town, only to find that his mother, father, brothers and sisters would have nothing to do with him. In fact, only a sister's son is ever mentioned as having any interest in Paul. We are reminded of F.W. Myers words:

Yes without cheer of sister or of daughter  
Yes without stay of father or of son,  
Alone on the land and homeless on the water  
Pass I in patience til my work is done.

But even in the hours of these bitter disappointments, Christ gave him the Victory, so that he could say triumphantly, "They all forsook me and fled but THE LORD stood with me and strengthened me."

*Christ Gave Him the Victory  
All the Days of His Ministry*

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He was stoned, shipwrecked, thrown into jails and misunderstood, but he shouts out triumphantly, "In all these things we are more than conquerors through HIM who loves us."

### *Last of All, Christ Gave Paul the Victory in the Hour of Death*

Hear him as he says, "The time of my departure has come." He was ready to go and depart to be with Christ which is far better. And now we hear him say, "O death where is thy sting, O grave where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who giveth us the VICTORY through our LORD JESUS CHRIST." They are leading him up the hill now where his head will be put on a block and cut off. A few Christian friends are with him. His head is now on the block. The executioner raised his hand, but Paul makes a request to speak a word to his Christian friends. He raises his hand and says triumphantly, "Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." "Victory through Jesus all the way along." This is what Paul had.

### *Conclusion*

Wouldn't you like to live a victorious life like this? You may do so, if you, like Paul will surrender your life completely to Jesus Christ. Then you too will be able to say, "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the Victory through our LORD JESUS CHRIST." Just now, will you

bow your heads in prayer and say, "Lord Jesus, like Paul, I surrender all to Thee. I'll go where you want me to go. I'll be what you want me to be." Then you will have Victory in every hour.

In the hour of distress, the hour of danger, the hour of doubt, the hour of disappointment, in fact, all the days and years Christ may permit you to live on this earth, and when the hour of death comes, you will be able to say, "Victory through Jesus."

## THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN THE WORLD

"The greatest of these is love." II Cor., 13th Chapter.

### *Introduction*

If people were asked what they thought the most important thing in the world was, no doubt the replies would vary. Some might say, "peace", others "money," still others might reply, "I think success is the most important thing in the world, or education." However, we will turn to the Word of God, for God's Word has the answers to all our questions. We find these words, "The greatest of these is LOVE."

The Bible has a great deal to say about love. This morning time will not permit us to take up all that the Bible teaches but I am going to ask you to consider First: The Love of God, Second: Our Love.

*The Love of God*

There are beautiful verses about God's Love. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love," we find God telling his unworthy children. We think of the familiar words, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." We turn to the love of God as revealed in Christ Jesus and we read these beautiful words, "having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." John 13. In Ephesians we read these words, "To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, the height, the breadth, the length, the depth."

Christ's love included those who were in high standing in the world, such as Nicodemus. Christ reached up to him with His wonderful love. This love reached him. His love can reach those who are in high society or who are very intellectual today. We are reminded of Queen Elizabeth, who requested that at her wedding the beautiful hymn might be sung, "The Lord Is My Shepherd."

*Christ's Love Reached Down  
to the Lowest Depth*

He loved poor Mary Magdalene who had seven devils. He loved her so much that He brought her out of the depths of sin so that she became His first messenger after His resurrection and throughout the world colleges, homes, and even rivers are named "Mary Magdalene" in her honor. One of the colleges of Oxford University is even named in her honor. Why? Because

Christ's love reached down and transformed her life, from a terrible sinner she became a saint. "A wonderful Savior is Jesus our Lord."

*Oh, the Breadth of Christ's Love*

We read "God so Loved the World." That means every race, every color. Now Christ's love took in everyone, although they were different. "Now Jesus loved Mary and Martha," how different they were. How different were His disciples and yet He loved them. No two persons are alike, but thank God His love takes them all in.

*And Oh What Length Did the Love  
of Christ Go*

"On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross, and I love that old cross for the dearest and best, For a world of lost sinners was slain."

How about our love for our blessed Savior? "Can you reject such matchless love, can you His claim disown?" Come give your all, in gratitude and love Him with all your hearts, mind and strength.

Illustration: The story is told of a little boy whose Mother had died. His father did not take good care of him because he was an alcoholic. The little nine year old kept staying away from school. He would be brought before the Judge, who would keep telling him he must go to school, but he continued to stay away. However, one



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day he came to the Judge and said, "I can go to school now. I have it all paid for." "What do you mean?" said the Judge who felt sorry for the little fellow. He handed the Judge a crumpled paper which proved to be a receipted bill and found that little by little the little fellow had paid for a headstone at his Mother's grave. "Is that what you've been doing all these months?" asked the Judge.

"Yes," said the little fellow, "I wanted her to have a monument, Judge." Then he wiped the tears from his eyes, "You see she done a lot for me, that's all I could do for her now."

The dear Lord Jesus has done so much for us. Will you do all you can for Him now?

Our Heavenly Father, Give us love to love thee for Thy love, and to love Him who first loved us and gave Himself for us. Loving Thee we shall love one another, and loving one another we shall do Thy will and doing Thy will we shall always do right. In the precious name of Jesus who loves us with an everlasting love. Amen.

Prayer by the late Peter Marshall

## GOOD NEWS

"Behold I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all people" "For to you is born this day a Savior who is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:10

*Introduction*

*This Good News is for All  
People — A Saviour*

When I was in Calexico, California visiting my son and his wife, we went into his church. I sat down at the piano and my husband and I started to sing, "Oh Come all ye Faithful." Very quietly two Mexican youths came into the Church and listened. At the close of the hymn they came to the front of the Sanctuary. They could not speak English but I felt they wished to pray. I pointed up and said, "God," then knelt down and the two young men also knelt. My husband was on one side of them, I on the other. I laid my hand on each of them and prayed that our Saviour would come into their lives and asked God to guide them and keep them in His care. After I finished praying we stood up. I shook hands with them and they left. Good news for ALL people.

Reverend Robert Johnson, former missionary to Burma writes, "If there is one thing of which I am convinced, it is the church in Burma will not falter because the missionaries were asked to leave. There is a strong Christian church won to Christ, baptized and committed which will continue to minister the reconciling Gospel." Good News for All: Mexicans, Burmese, Russians, Indians, Negroes; All colors, All races — A Savior who is Christ the Lord.

Luke 4th Chapter

*We Have One Who can Heal the  
Broken-hearted*

“He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted.” One has said, “He never practiced psychiatry and yet He has healed more broken hearts than all the doctors far and near.”

Illustration: During World War II, a Mother was just going out to sing one evening. She was a well-known soloist. Suddenly the door bell rang. Her husband opened the door and was handed a telegram, “Regret to inform you that your son was killed in action.” He read it but could not speak. After a moment he handed it to his wife. She read it — was stunned and speechless. Then she saw a little red rocking chair in which her son used to rock as a little boy. Silently she knelt down at the rocker and her husband knelt beside her. They prayed together and then she said, standing up, “I can go on now.” “A wonderful Saviour is Jesus our Lord.” A wonderful Healer.

Often, so often, at a funeral service I have quoted the words of that hymn, “Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal.” These words are true. Good News.

*Good News — We Have an Unfailing Helper*

Think with me of the blind man of whom we read in the ninth chapter of John. The disciples wanted to discuss the case. “Who sinned, this man or his parents?” Jesus helped him, Gave him his sight, after which the

neighbors simply talked. The Mother and Father were afraid they might be cast out of the Synagogue, so they would not state who healed him. The Pharisees cast him out. Now listen to this: When Jesus heard they had cast him out, He found him and said, "Do you believe on the Son of God?" The man said, "Who is He?" Jesus said, "I that speak unto thee am He." And the man worshipped Him. He had found an Unfailing Helper and an Unfailing Helper had found him.

Just when I need Him, Jesus is near

Just when I need Him most.

*Good News — This Savior can  
Give us Eternal Life*

No earthly doctor can do this. He is the only one. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Over yonder on Canon Wilberforce's grave in Westminster Abbey, you may read these words, "Tis death is dead not he." On the last Sunday of my dear Mother's life on earth, when I came in from church she said, "I want to tell you of a beautiful dream I have had. I have been to Heaven and I was so happy I did not wish to return to this earth, but they led me out to the gate and said, "Go back for a little while, we will soon come for you." So she said, "I am going home to heaven soon." I went out in the kitchen to make her a cup of tea and when I returned, in less than five minutes, she had had a stroke. She went home to Heaven on Wednesday. What a wonderful Savior! Good News. He has prepared a Place for all who accept Him and they may have eternal life.

*Conclusion*

Is this wonderful Savior your Savior? Do you believe this Good News? Then tell others about this Good News. Pray; Pray that all over, men may come to know and believe this Good News.

*COURAGE*

Joshua 1:5,6

“As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee, I will not fail thee nor forsake thee, be strong and of good courage.”

*Introduction*

None of us can admire the man who said in the parable which Jesus told, “I was afraid and went and hid thy talent in the earth.” But although we do not admire this man sometimes we get discouraged and want to give up the good fight as did Elijah for a few hours. The devil’s tool which he often uses is discouragement. So, we are going to think on courage.

*Joshua*

It took courage for Joshua to become the leader of the children of Israel. He did not have the ability that Moses possessed, but God said, “Be strong and of good courage, I will not fail thee.” Notice the ninth verse of Joshua. God was giving him the necessary courage. Even down to his old age, he had this courage. “As for

me and my house we will serve the Lord."

It takes courage to be Christian leaders in our day and age.

### *John the Baptist*

It took courage for John the Baptist to answer the question "Art thou he that should come?" He said, "No, I am only a voice. I am sent to make straight His way." It took courage to put Christ first, to point others to "The Lamb of God" and not to himself.

### *Early Christians*

It took courage for the early Christians to endure, but they did. Others have also done this with the courage God gave them. David Livingstone said, and had as his motto, "I determined never to stop until I had come to the end and achieved my purpose." By unfaltering persistence, and faith in God, he conquered.

### *Conclusion*

This courage may be ours today. As we face the future, we are going to need it. The same God lives today and as He said to Joshua, so He says to us, "As I was with Moses so I will be with thee. I will not fail thee nor forsake thee, be strong and of good courage."

MAMA WAS A PREACHER  
*THE HANDS OF CHRIST*

Luke 24:39 "Behold My Hands"

*Introduction*

How we value our hands. Indeed, they are very important. It was found that valuable information could be discovered by the study of an infant's palm. Now, this morning, we are asking you to consider the Hands of Christ which are far more important. Jesus said to His disciples, "Behold my Hands." Luke 24:39

*They Are Suffering Hands*

*They were nailed to the cross for us.  
I am weary with toiling, Lord.  
Show me Thy Hands  
If My load should lead to complaining,  
Lord, show me Thy Hands.*

*They Are Saving Hands*

Immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand and caught him and said unto him, "Oh thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Matthew 14:31

Peter did not need to jump from the boat, but he was

determined to do it, so Jesus said, "Come." He began to look at the waves instead of looking to Jesus, and he was sinking, but Jesus stretched forth His hand to save him. Jesus stretches out His Hand to save us today.

The Hands of Christ seem very frail  
for they were broken by a nail  
but only they reach heaven at last  
whom these frail, broken hands hold fast.

### *They Are Transforming Hands*

Jesus transformed the lives of the disciples and all who believed in Him. He still transforms lives today.

Outside Trinity Church in Boston, there is a statue of Phillips Brooks. You see the statue of Dr. Brooks, that marvelous preacher, but in back of Dr. Brooks with His hand on his shoulder, is the hand of Christ. That was the secret of his fruitful ministry. He was a failure as a teacher, but Christ put His hand on him and transformed his life.

I used to pray that Christ would put His hand on the shoulder of one of my loved ones and transform his life. Prayer was answered, and Christ still has transforming hands. All of us need His hands on our lives.

### *They are Healing Hands*

In God's Word we read that Peter's wife's Mother was ill, and Jesus came and put His Hand upon her. He healed her and she rose and ministered to them.



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The healing of His seamless dress  
Is by our beds of pain  
We touch Him in life's throng and press  
And we are whole again.

In the case of both of my sons, the healing hands of Christ have been placed upon them. The older son had polio and was healed. The younger son had pneumonia and a very bad heart condition. Christ has no favorites and He still puts His healing hands upon us today.

### *Conclusion*

Will you now behold His Hands? The Suffering Hands, The Saving Hands, The Transforming Hands, The Healing Hands. In Genesis we read that Joseph's Master put all he had in Joseph's hands. He trusted Joseph. My friends, you can trust the Hand that was nailed to the cross for you. Won't you put all you have and all you are in His Hands and say, "My Jesus, as thou wilt, all shall be well for me, into Thy Hands of Love I would my all resign."

## DOES GOD GUIDE US?

### *Introduction*

About 2600 years ago King Zedikiah came to the throne. At the age of twenty-one he was greatly disturbed and distraught at the conditions of his land. He sent for the prophet Jeremiah whom he had put in prison. When

Jeremiah was brought to him, pale and gaunt, King Zedekiah asked him this question, "Is there any word from the Lord?" Jeremiah answered, "There is." Jeremiah 37:17

Our subject this morning is in the form of a question, "Does God guide us?" Is there any word from the Lord concerning this?

### *What Does God's Word Say*

- A. "The Lord shall guide thee continually." Is. 58:11
- B. "Thine ears shall hear a voice saying, This is the way, walk ye in it." Is. 30:21
- C. Listen to these tender words, "He shall gently lead those that are with young.", Is. 40:11
- D. We turn to the Psalmist and hear him say, "The meek will He guide in judgment" and again, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths."
- E. Many more words from the Lord we could give on guidance but one will suffice. "Christ's own words, 'He calleth His own sheep by name and leadeth them out.'" John 10:3

### *Did God Guide in Bible Days?*

A. In speaking of the Children of Israel, we read in God's word, "He led them by the skillfulness of His Hands." They were stubborn, and because of their lack of faith they had to wander in the wilderness for forty years. Only their children and Caleb and Joshua were

allowed to enter The Promised Land. In spite of their stubbornness and failings, God in His great love, led them "by the skilfulness of His hands." Although this was not God's best for them, He guided them all during those forty years.

B. We think of Joseph. His brothers did a very mean thing when they sold him into slavery. Years later these brothers came down to Egypt for grain, due to a famine in their land. Joseph said to them, "It was not you that sent me hither, but God."

C. We turn to the New Testament. After Paul's conversion, he said, "Lord what wilt Thou have me to do?" Now, one time in his Missionary travels he planned to go to Bythinia, but he tells us he was stopped by the Holy Spirit. He went west to the sea to Troas, had a vision, saw people in Macedonia saying, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." He went, and established a church in Phillipi. Thus Christianity came to Europe. You see how God guided him?

### *Does God Guide in Our Day and Age?*

Do we need His guidance? How have we been doing? We who have been so self-sufficient and self-directed.

1. Let us look at some of the facts. Seventy-two percent of the world's population are non-Christian. That means only twenty-eight percent are Christian.

2. There are about nine hundred million illiterates in our world. At no time are there more than fifty-three percent of the eligible children enrolled in school.

3. Forty years ago Communism was confined to so small a group that they could be seated in a choir loft.

Today Communism controls the lives of about eight hundred million persons. Mr. Krushev predicted that our grandchildren will live under Communism.

4. Then we can think of the racial strife, and so we could go on, but I think you will agree with me that to be self-directed is far from the wise thing to be.

### *Now God will Guide Us Today*

But how, you may ask?

A. He guides us by His Word. "The Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation."

A certain Atheist said he would prove the Scriptures were not true. He studied the Gospels with this end in view, but as he studied he found Christ, came to believe in Him and wrote these words.

I've tried in vain a thousand ways  
my fears to quell, my hopes to raise  
but what I need the Bible says  
is ever — only Jesus.  
So, God guides by His Word.

### *God guides by circumstances*

Dr. Robertson, that great preacher, desired to become an officer in the army. His Father, Grandfather, and three brothers were officers. He applied for a comission, and waited and waited, but none came through. Finally he decided to go to Oxford University to study for the ministry. Five days after he had gone to Oxford his commission came through. But he said he would not accept it, but would continue his studying for

the ministry; and looking back he said, "Who could but believe that God had a hand in that commission being delayed?"

*God Guides By the Written  
or Spoken Word of Friends*

Take the case of Dr. Switzer, that great doctor in Africa. He was perplexed as to what he should do. On his desk he noticed a green magazine. He picked it up little dreaming how God was going to speak to him through this written word. It was a Missionary Magazine. He looked at the words, "The Needs of the Congo Mission," then he read these words, "Men and women are needed who can simply reply to the Master's call: "Lord, I'm coming." That settled it for Dr. Switzer.

Or it may be that guidance will come through the spoken word of a friend or minister. Think for a moment of the guidance that came to Dr. Boreham, that noted minister and author of Australia. He received a call to a larger church, but he hesitated to accept, for the people had been so very kind to him. They had given him a trip home to England. His wife and he prayed and prayed but no light came. He wrote telling the people in the church that had extended the call that he would send a telegram on a certain day giving his decision. He and his wife went to the telegraph office. It was five minutes of five. He turned to his wife and said, "I still don't know what to tell them, and I must send that telegram." Just then one of the leading men in his church came up to him and said, "Dr. Boreham, we

have heard you have received a call to a larger church. While we do not want you to go, I feel I should tell you we all feel you should take this church if you will have a larger opportunity for service." Dr. Boreham had received the guidance he needed, and rushed into the telegraph office to send the telegram of acceptance.

*And Last of All God Guides by  
the Still Small Voice of His Spirit*

Now please notice I said His spirit, not conscience. Conscience, many times is controlled by what is customary — social customs. For instance, in some countries natives think it all right to eat human beings. That is the custom. That of which I am speaking, is the Voice of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "When He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth." Reason should have its place, but not reason alone.

One Saturday morning the snow was blowing, and I was very busy. Seldom did I make calls on a Saturday morning, but this morning I felt led to call on a certain lady who was dying. I had called before, and found her unconscious. So, I tried to put the thought out of my mind. Again, the Spirit of God spoke. I made the call. Her daughter came to the door and said, "We were just wishing you would come, Mother is conscious." I entered her room, and she asked me if I thought God would ever forgive her; that she had brought up her daughters to have no respect for God or the Church. I assured her that God, for Jesus sake, would forgive her. She accepted Christ as her Savior, and during the two

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weeks she lived, she led all four of her daughters to Christ, and they are faithful workers in the church today.

God does guide us if we wish Him to do so. How greatly we need His guidance!

There is a Guide Who never falters,  
And where He leads I cannot stray  
For step by step, He goes before me  
Let Jesus lead, He knows the way.

## YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH

### *Introduction*

In the days of Jesus, salt was very important to keep things. The fishermen knew the importance. They used salt constantly to keep their fish from going bad. We, as Christians must seek to preserve the good, and take a fearless stand for the right. We must seek to keep the society in which we live honest, and lift up our eyes and the eyes of others to the "Hill of Law." The Ten Commandments seem forgotten. "Thou shalt not kill." The F.B.I. reports a murder every hour. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Divorce and multiple marriages are common. Also a forced rape occurs every thirty-two minutes. "Thou shalt not steal." Last year the total worth of property stolen was \$785,000,000. Lawlessness increases, alcoholism grows.

We must take a fearless stand if we are to be the salt of the earth. A few months ago, for more than half an

hour, thirty-seven respectable, law abiding citizens in a residential section of New York watched a killer stalk and stab a woman in three separate attacks. Yet not one of the witnesses made a move to help the screaming woman. Why didn't they at least call the police? A husband and wife said, "We were afraid." Another spectator said, "I didn't want to get involved." Another man said, "I was tired, I went back to bed."

Far too many people these days are like the boy out with an oversized Saint Bernard dog on a leash. A passerby asked the boy where he was taking the dog. Said the youngster, "I don't know. I'm waiting to see where he's going first." Many of us are victims of this moral and spiritual neutrality.

How greatly do we admire the person who takes his stand for what he feels is just and right. In his book, "Profiles in Courage" John F. Kennedy told the thrilling story of a little known Senator named Edmund G. Ross. Andrew Johnson had been impeached. Those in favor of his conviction were assured of thirty-five votes and they needed only a "guilty" from Ross to get the verdict. With the Senate chambers packed to the galleries the question came, "Mr. Senator Ross, How say you?" Ross had no personal love for Andrew Johnson. He was not a member of the President's party. But he was a man of conscience. A death-like silence blanketed those chambers as everyone waited for the Senator's reply. Finally Ross rose deliberately and said in a calm firm voice, "Not Guilty." The die was cast. Andrew Johnson was saved. Later Ross said, "I almost literally looked down into my open grave. Friendships, position, fortune, everything that makes life desirable to an ambitious man were about to be swept away by



the breath of my mouth, perhaps forever." But regardless of cost he stood for what he believed.

"Lord unto us may grace be given to follow in the train of thy brave soldiers and be, 'The salt of the earth'."

Awhile ago I heard a man from Russia speak. He had been sentenced to Siberia, but after his release he found Christ, and came to America to study for the ministry. He fell in love with a good girl, and when he asked her to marry him he said this, "I want to marry you. I love you but you must come third." Then he explained as he saw the look of bewilderment on her face. "I must put Christ first, His work second and you third." She agreed.

Oh, my friends, I value your friendship and loyalty, but above all I want you to be true friends to Jesus. Be all for him.

One of our missionaries in China, after losing her husband on the field was left with her two little daughters. It became necessary for her to make a decision. She must either send her two little ones back to the United States and go with them, leaving her field of service, or stay and remain alone. She decided to stay and as she saw them off on the boat they waved their little hands to her, and then when she could no longer see them, a friend standing by her saw her lift up her eyes to Heaven and she heard her say, "All for Thee Jesus, All for Thee." Naught else is worthy of His friendship.

"Love so amazing, so divine, demands our time, our strength, our all."

Lord Jesus, help us to be true, loyal, loving friends to Thee, down to the gates of death.

Messages by Reverend Ruth  
*OUT OF DOORS WITH JESUS*

“That the world through Him might be Saved.” John  
3:17

*Introduction*

All our plans for saving the world seem to be failing. We have recently read that the United Nations adjourned. No decision was reached concerning the Middle East. The problem goes back to the Security Council. Now God has a plan for saving the world, “He sent not His son to judge the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”

Our subject this morning is “Out of Doors with Jesus.” Most of Jesus’ work was done out of doors. He is dealing with three types of persons, three types who are in the world today.

*Early in the Morning*

A wealthy young man comes running to Jesus. Although he had wealth he was not satisfied. He said to Jesus, “What lack I yet?” Jesus told him to sell what he had, give to the poor, and then, “Come follow me.” You see he lacked a worthy purpose. John D. Rockefeller, Sr., said, “The poorest man on earth is the man who has

## MAMA WAS A PREACHER

only money." The young man went away sorrowful. He thought money was more important than Christ as Savior. As he was going away from Jesus, our Lord said, "How hard it is for these who have riches to enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Matt. 19:20-22. The disciples said, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus said, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." Matt. 19:26

### *Now it is Noon Day*

We read Jesus had to pass through Samaria. Jesus was weary with His journey and sat down beside the well. A Samaritan woman came to draw water. Now in those days the Jews had nothing to do with the Samaritans. She was a very wicked woman, having had five husbands, and living with a man who was not her husband. Jesus knew all about her and although he was weary and she was such a wicked woman Jesus took time to talk with her and told her He was the promised Messiah. She believed in Christ and accepted Him as her Savior. Would you think it possible? Her life was completely changed. One has said she was changed from "Moral Leper to City Missionary." She went home to her city and many believed in Jesus because of that woman's testimony. Isn't it wonderful what Christ can do with a life? "It Is No Secret What God Can Do."

*Out of Doors with Jesus at Night*

Jesus is now dealing with a very intellectual person. He tells him he cannot belong to the Kingdom of God unless he be born again. What does Christ mean by being, "born again"? This is misunderstood by many. He means you must start life over again belonging to Christ. In my first service, which was held in Merrimac Mission Boston, at the close of the service, when the invitation was given, a wealthy lady who had traveled all over the world came forward. She said, "Now young lady, I want to talk theology with you." I was just starting to study and didn't know anything about theology. She continued, "I've studied all the Philosophies and also Christianity but I still don't understand Christianity." I said, "I can't explain how Christ comes into your life, but if you will kneel down with me and ask His forgiveness and tell Him you want Him as your Saviour, you will know you belong to Him." She knelt down and like a child prayed humbly and sincerely. Then when she stood on her feet her face was aglow and said, "For the first time I know what Christ can do." They told us that for the rest of her life, she was happy and knew Him, not just about Him.

You see, even the most intellectual, like Nicodemus, cannot understand the great mysteries of God until they become like little children.

*Conclusion*

It is Morning again. Easter Morning, Mary is weeping. Our Lord gives her a message. It is very clear, "Go tell my disciples and Peter."

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How is the World going to be saved? "Through Him." What can we do? Go tell. Tell it to the children, tell it to the young people, to all classes. The world can be saved through Him. We are to witness to this. Will you go and tell? Tell by your lives, tell by your prayers, tell by your voice. Tell it out upon the mountains.

God's plan is the only plan that will work in our world.

## THE PASSING AND THE ETERNAL

Deuteronomy 33:27 "The Eternal God is Thy Refuge."

### *Introduction*

Another year has passed. How quickly time goes by. We desire you to think of the Eternal. In the beautiful hymn, "Abide With Me" the writer says,  
"Change and decay in all around I see  
O thou who changest not abide with me."  
The Bible tells us of that which is eternal.

*The Eternal God*

A. Moses "The eternal God is thy refuge and underneath thee are the everlasting arms."

B. The Psalmist "Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God."

C. James 1:17 "Father of light in whom is no variableness of turning."

*The Eternal Word*

A. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall never pass away." Matt. 5:18

B. "The word of the Lord endureth forever." I Peter 1:25

*The Eternal Home*

A. "We know that if our earthly house is destroyed, we have a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens." II Cor. 5:1

B. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." I John 2:17

MAMA WAS A PREACHER  
*LOOKING IN FOUR DIRECTIONS*

*Introduction*

Solomon, How great was the task that faced him.  
What he did. I Kings 3

*He Looked Back*

He remembered how God helped his Father. We too  
should look back and remember those who have helped  
us. At Ocean Grove, New Jersey the young people sang  
these words:

I sing a song of the saints of God  
Patient and brave and true  
Who toiled and fought and lived and died  
For the Lord they loved and knew  
They loved their Lord so dear  
And His love made them strong  
And they followed the right for Jesus' sake  
The whole of their good lives long,  
And there's not any reason  
No, not the least  
Why I shouldn't be one too.

It does us good to remember the Christians who have  
gone on before.

## Messages by Reverend Ruth

Gibbon, the famous historian, declared that in the third century of our era, only five percent captured the Roman Empire and made it more Christian than pagan.

### *Solomon Looked at Himself*

He felt he was not sufficiently great enough to lead these people. Many of us feel like the Negro expressed it, "I ain very much, but ise all I got."

### *Around Him*

He saw the need of the people.

### *Solomon Looked Up to His God*

We too, must look to the same God. We read, "They looked unto Him and were radiant." And again, "Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith." "I looked to Jesus, and I found in Him my star, my light, my sun, and in that light of life I'll walk till traveling days are done."



MAMA WAS A PREACHER  
*THE FOUR ANCHORS EVERYONE NEEDS  
ON LIFE'S STORMY SEA*

Acts 27:29 "Fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors."

*Introduction*

There was a terrible storm at sea, and everyone, with the exception of Paul, who was a passenger on the ship, feared no lives would be saved. They were so frightened, but Paul had four anchors which held him steady so he could encourage his companions on the ship. We need these four anchors today in this stormy world.

*Paul had Confidence in God*

After fasting and prayer, Paul stood forth in their midst and said, "I exhort you to be of good cheer, for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, for there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am and whom I serve, saying, 'Fear not, Paul, thou must be brought before Caesar and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee,' therefore sirs, be of good cheer, for I believe God." Acts 27:22-25

Do we believe God and His Word today? If we do, even in our stormy world we can hold steady. Confidence in God and His Word is needed in all our lives.

*Paul had Courage*

This confidence in God and His promise gave Paul Courage so he could impart courage to his companions. After fasting for fourteen days, Paul urged them to eat for he said, "There shall not a hair of your head perish." Then Paul took bread, and after asking the blessing, he ate. They were then all of good cheer and began to eat.

We need courage in these days, and God can give us courage, and He will, if we have confidence in Him.

*Consecration*

Paul was completely consecrated to the Will of God from the day he said, "Lord what will you have me to do?" Acts 9:6. He was willing to go anywhere or do anything he felt the Lord wanted. It was not His will but God's will he desired.

The world is in great need of Christians who are willing and desire to do the Lord's Will. When we are completely consecrated, we will have peace and be able to hold steady on life's stormy sea.

*Paul had Christ*

He had accepted Christ as his Lord and Savior. He knew his sins were forgiven and his great desire was to win others to our Lord Jesus. He cries out triumphantly,

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"I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me," Philippians 4:13 And again, he said, "I have suffered the loss of all things that I may win Christ."

### *Conclusion*

We are reminded of the words in the old hymn. "With Christ in the vessel we can smile at the storm."

You and I need these four anchors today for the sea is stormy. Do you have them? Confidence in God and His Word, Courage, Consecration, and above all Christ who is the way, the truth, and the life. Will you accept these anchors today?

## CONQUERORS THROUGH CHRIST

Romans 8:37 "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

### *Introduction*

Need not be conquered.

### *Paul was a Conqueror Over Sin*

He tells us in II Timothy 4:18, "The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom."

Today Christ gives us the deliverance we need from sin. So we can be more than conquerors.

A man serving as superintendant of a mission in Boston, had come in as an alcoholic and knelt at the altar. Christ delivered him, and he was serving in his eleventh year in that mission helping others to be more than conquerors over sin.

*Paul was a Conqueror Over Selfishness*

He could have had a wealthy, easy life, but was willing to give up everything for the sake of Christ. It is natural to be selfish but Christ can help us to be more than conquerors and to seek first His kingdom.

*Paul was a Conqueror Over  
Disappointment and Suffering*

The church at Jerusalem did not welcome Paul with open arms at first, and his loved ones refused to stand by him after he became a Christian, with the exception of perhaps one loved one, but he was more than conqueror. He said, "None of these things move me, neither count I life dear unto myself, so I might finish my course with joy." Acts 20:24. Although he suffered in jails, he was more than a conqueror.

Today we can be more than conquerors over disappointments and suffering through Him who loves us.

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### *Paul was Conqueror Over Loneliness*

In II Timothy he writes, "Demas hath forsaken me having loved this present world. At my first answer all men forsook me but the Lord stood with me and strengthened me." II Timothy 4:17

You and I can be more than conquerors over loneliness, for the same Lord will stand with us and strengthen us, as He did with the Livingstones in Africa.

### *Paul was a Conqueror Over Death*

He felt that when Christ's time came to take him, "To depart and be with Christ would be far better."

The late Dr. Henry Jewett said, "When they say of me, 'He is dead,' then shall I be reveling in the fullness of life."

Yes we can, through Christ, be more than conquerors over death. Jesus said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." John 17:3

## THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF CHRIST BE OF GOOD CHEER

"Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee."  
Matthew 9:2

"Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid." Matthew 9:2

"Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." John  
16:33

*Introduction*

People need these words of Christ today. Many are discouraged and almost overcome.

*“Be of good cheer, thy sins  
are forgiven thee”*

We have a Savior who forgives and who remembers our sins no more. He does not want us to feel despondent over any past sins.

“As far as the east is removed from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us, and will remember them no more.”

St. Augustine, in his confessions which are so famous, tells us he committed every known sin, but his Mother kept praying, and God answered her prayers. He became a saint of God. God led him in the right way. The Lord will do just the same for any of us.

*“Be of good cheer, It is I,  
be not afraid”*

He assured the disciples He was with them. They were frightened. See Matt 14:27

His presence is with us today and always. We need not be afraid, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me.”

## MAMA WAS A PREACHER

*"Be of good cheer, I have  
overcome the world"*

There were many things that would overcome the disciples of Christ. They would meet with disappointments. Even when Jesus spoke these words, the prospects for cheer were far from bright. He was facing betrayal by Judas, denial by Peter, to be forsaken by friends, condemned to death by His enemies, but He was cheerful and courageous. He had faith in God and fellowship with Him, so He overcame all these things. He desires us to have this faith and fellowship as He wished His disciples to have, and says to us, "Be of good cheer I have overcome," and so may you. Amen.

### *Conclusion*

"Be of good cheer." Today I hear Him saying this to us. There is nothing that you and I cannot overcome, if we have faith in the One who overcame, and fellowship with Him.

## THE MAN WHO SUCCEEDED IN SPITE OF FAILURE

"The Lord Turned and Looked at Peter." Luke 22:61

*Introduction*

We have been looking at many things during the past week. Housewives have looked at dishes to be washed or perhaps looked in store windows. Men have looked at their work which they must do, or perhaps at new cars. We have all looked at people. Now this morning, I am going to ask you to look at one of Jesus' disciples. One who is so human, we feel he is like us. Yes, it is Peter. We read, "The Lord turned and looked on Peter." So let us look.

*Peter the fisherman*

Born on the North Shore of the Lake of Galilee.  
He followed in his father's trade, and became a fisherman.

He was mending his nets when Jesus saw him.  
Jesus said, "Follow me, I will make you to become fishers of men." Note the psychology Jesus used here.

*Peter the follower of Jesus*

He arose, left all, and followed Jesus. He had a wife and a mother-in-law, but trusted in Christ and felt He would provide.

We see Peter in his home. His mother-in-law had a fever. Jesus healed her. He still heals today when it is His will.



On the water we now see Peter. He had jumped from the boat to go to Jesus. Very impulsive was Peter. No need for him to jump from that boat, but Jesus stretched forth His hand and saved him. When we do impulsive things, Christ helps us out.

Now see him rebuking Jesus. Jesus told them He must go to the cross.

Hear him make his great declaration, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Boastful Peter. Overconfident in himself, "Although all may forsake Thee, yet will not I."

### *Peter the Failure*

"Thou shalt deny me thrice." Peter said, "I know not the man."

"The Lord turned and looked upon Peter."

"I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." His courage had failed.

See Peter as he weeps bitterly.

### *Peter the Fearless*

No longer boastful He could now say, "I live yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

On the day of Pentecost, he preached fearlessly. Three thousand were added to the church.

Hear him say, "Whether it is right to hearken unto you or God judge ye," and he went out and preached Jesus everywhere.

The Lord turned and looked upon Peter. He looks on each of us. We may have failed, but He is stretching forth His hand to help us to try again and we, too, can become His fearless followers. "Just when I need Him, Jesus is near, just when I falter, just when I fear, ready to help me, ready to cheer. Just when I need Him most."

### *IS THERE ANY GOOD NEWS FOR OUR DAY?*

In Phoenix, Arizona, there is a large sign one might see as he enters the city, "Have you heard the Good News?" It would seem as if everything is nearly all bad news. Recently I have been reading about Art Linkletter's daughter, and his great sadness as his young daughter took an overdose of L.S.D. He writes a warning to all parents on the harmful effects of drugs so many are using today. So, we could go on with sad news of which we hear and read plenty. But I have chosen as our subject, "Good News for our Day." Let us turn to the Word of God.

In Jeremiah 33:3 we read these words, "Call unto me, I will answer thee and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not."

What is the Good News? God has answered prayers in the past. Does He still answer prayer today?"

*Prayer and fasting that  
Saved a Nation*

In the book of Esther, we read she requested that all her people fast and pray for three days. She would do the same. Then she would go to the King. A very wicked man had requested all the Jewish people be killed. But God answered the prayer of Mordacai and all the Jewish people. Their lives were saved by a decree from the king. We read, "The Jews had light, joy and gladness and honor instead of death."

*Peter was in jail*

In Acts 12:5 we read the people gathered together and, "Prayer was made without ceasing." The Good News? Peter was set free by an angel, led out of the city, and came to the house in which the people had gathered to pray. A life was saved. A miracle was performed by God, who still performs miracles today.

We come down near to our day. George Washington was facing defeat. The morale of his pitiful army was at a very low ebb. But Washington knelt in the snow at Valley Forge and prayed. A glorious victory was given. The Revolutionary War was won. Victory instead of defeat, through prayer. This can happen today.

*Abraham Lincoln was at His  
Lowest Point*

It was during the Civil War. He felt he could go on no further. Two Quaker ladies, or members of The Friends Church felt led to come and see him. They said, "Brother Lincoln, the Lord has sent us to pray with thee." That great man knelt down humbly with the two sisters. They both prayed. Then after they arose to their feet, Lincoln said, "I can go on now." Power to go on may still be obtained today as we kneel before God.

We kneel how weak,

We rise how full of power.

A troubled Mother and Father requested prayer for their wayward son who had run away from home, just as young people are doing today. D. L. Moody, the great Evangelist says, "Many people came to the altar to pray for that son way off in Australia." What happened? At that very time the son was driving to town from the bush in Australia. He suddenly began to think of home and his mother and father. Then the spirit of God came upon him in conviction. He dismounted from his horse, knelt down and asked God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Peace came. He sent a message to his Mother, "Will you forgive me? May I come home?" The parents replied, "Come at once." Our prayers are felt by others. Sooner or later they are answered.

"God answers prayer in the morning, God answers prayer at noon, God answers prayer in the evening, so keep your heart in tune."

### *Conclusion*

"Have you heard the Good News?" Here it is and it is true even in our day. "Call upon me and I will answer

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thee and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not."

Jesus said, "Men ought always to pray and not to faint," or as the late Dr. Jowett translated this, "Men ought always to pray and they will not faint."

Dr. Billy Graham was asked the secret of amazing power manifested in his services. He said, "It is all due to prayer. The prayer of those who, in every corner of the world, are praying."

God answers prayer in the morning

God answers prayer at noon

God answers prayer in the evening

So, keep your heart in tune.

## CAN CHRISTIANITY SURVIVE?

Please turn with me to the writing of the Prophet Habakkuk.

### *Habakkuk's Land*

1. Conditions internally (violence, injustice, idolatry)
2. Conditions externally (Judah was caught between Babylon and Egypt.)

### *Habakkuk Complains to God*

1. He is told to listen
2. He says, "I will hear what the Lord shall say to me when I am reproved."

### *The Message From God*

There were three stars in Habakkuk's dark night that were still shining.

1. Faith. "The Just shall live by faith." Hab. 2:4
2. Knowledge of God. "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as waters cover the sea." Hab. 1 2:14
3. Presence of the Lord. "The Lord is in His Holy Temple." Hab. 2:20

### *The Result of Listening to God*

Habakkuk could rejoice in spite of all circumstances. "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, and no herds in the stall yet I will rejoice in the Lord." "I will joy in the God of my salvation." Hab. 3:17-18

### *Prospects of Christianity Today*

In the book "Prospects of Christianity Throughout the World," we read the opinion of distinguished contributors throughout the world. Dr. Malik tells us that among 120 million people, there are only six to eight million who are Christians.

Dr. Douglass, writing on North America, states, "In spite of numerical growth, never has there been a time when the leadership of the church has displayed more symptoms of self-doubt, uncertainty, and questioning

## MAMA WAS A PREACHER

concerning the future.”

The late C.S. Lewis states clearly the purpose of the church when he says, “The church exists for nothing else but to draw men unto Christ.”

*Three Stars are Still Shining  
Today in Our Dark Night*

1. Faith
2. Knowledge of the Lord
3. The presence of the Lord

The Lord of Hosts is still with us — Glory to His Name!

Wallace Hamilton of St. Petersburg, Florida, says, “Now the winds are blowing again, fierce winds, a time of trouble. The modern world seems to be coming apart. Nobody knows what will happen next year or the next decade or the next century, that can blow out the light of God as revealed in the face of Jesus Christ. “They are dead which sought the young child’s life.”

So, like Habakkuk, having faith we, too, can say, “Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.”

## BIBLE GARDENS

“And the Lord God planted a garden.” Genesis 2:8

*The First Garden “Garden of  
Sorrow” or Defeat*

This garden, which had been so beautiful, became a place of sorrow and defeat because of disobedience, because of sin, but even in the midst of all this sorrow caused by man's sinfulness, God made the promise which was going to be fulfilled in the coming of Jesus.

### *The Garden of Victory*

We follow Christ and see Him kneeling in the moonlight. Listen, we hear Him say, "Not my will but Thine be done." Three times He prayed this and there appeared an angel from heaven strengthening Him. That is how we can win the victory, when we say, "Not my will but Thine be done." "God's way is the best way."

With eager heart and will on fire  
I strove to win my great desire  
Peace shall be mine I cried  
But life grew bitter in the barren strife.  
Broken at last I bowed my head,  
Forgetting all myself and said,  
Whatever comes, Thy will be done,  
And in that moment peace was won.

### *The Garden of Everlasting Joy*

At the end of the Bible we read in Revelation 2:25, "There shall be no night there, neither light of the sun, for the Lamb is the light." "When they say of me, 'He is dead,' then shall I be reveling in the fullness of life."  
Dr. Jowett



*Conclusion*

We do not need to live in the garden of Sorrow and Defeat. We can live in the Garden of Victory. Oliver Cromwell said, "If a statue is ever made of me I want it to be made kneeling, for thence I came to Victory." Will you, with the help of Christ, live in this Garden of Victory? God's angels will come to help you in your most trying hour, and as your journey through life, say as Jesus did, "Not my will but Thine be done." You will have victory then. And the future? Glorious future for you and all who do Christ's will and not their own! "Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads." They shall live for all eternity in The Garden of Joy.

*THE UNFAILING SHEPHERD*

John 10

*Introduction*

People longing for security. This may be found in The Good Shepherd of whom we read in John 10.

*The Inclusiveness*

“I am the door by me if any man enter in he may be saved.” The old, the young, rich, poor, black, yellow or white. “Whosoever will.” This is an invitation for Everyone.

“I know my sheep, I call them by name.” It is a good thing to try to remember names of persons. One of our Presidents never could remember names. Another was more popular and better liked because he cultivated this habit of remembering names. Christ knows us and loves us as individuals, although we may have failed Him at times. He knows our needs, what is best for His sheep. We are the sheep of His pasture.

*Eternal Life*

“I give unto them eternal life.” No other kind of security can do this. No Life Insurance, but the Good Shepherd, has and can give this wonderful security, so that neither death nor life can separate us from His love.”

We turn to Romans 8. “I am sure that neither death nor life will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

*The Response of the Sheep*

See John 10

They hear His voice. So many voices, do we listen to His voice?

They follow Him., "My sheep follow me," wherever He leads. The Shepherd always went ahead in Palestine.

A banquet was given for two citizens in a certain town. They had both become well known, an actor and a minister. The actor recited the 23rd Psalm so beautifully that everyone clapped. Then the Minister stood up and he gave them the same, Psalm 23. When he finished the actor said, "I see the difference, I know the Psalm, but you know the Shepherd." Can we say, "The Lord is My Shepherd?"

*CALLED TO WITNESS*

"Many believed in Him through the woman's testimony." John 4:39 Phillips Translation

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will bear witness for me in Jerusalem, all over Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8 New English Bible

"Having obtained the help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great." Acts 26:22 King James

*Introduction*

A while ago a boy had to be a witness on the stand. The Judge said to him, "I suppose your father told you what to say?" "Yes sir," replied the boy. "What did he tell you?" "He told me to tell the truth at all times and I would be all right."

Our subject is "Called to be true Witnesses."

What is a witness? A witness is one who has personal knowledge of anything. This is one definition given which may well serve the purpose, this morning. I am going to ask you to think of four Bible witnesses.

*Naomi*

This mother-in-law was a faithful witness. She was living among unfaithful people, having moved to the land of Moab, where false gods were worshipped, yet she was faithful to her God. In fact, she was such a good witness that Ruth said in those unforgettable words, "Thy people shall be my people and Thy God my God." Ruth was even willing to leave her own homeland and go with her mother-in-law, to a strange land to her, because of Naomi's faithful witness.

How different the testimony of a funeral director who told me he had been on a fishing trip with a group of business men. He said there was just one man who impressed him. Each night he knelt beside his bed, and prayed. "That impressed me," said this funeral director. "It set me thinking that perhaps I ought to do some praying."

*The woman of Samaria*

Here is an unlikely witness.

Who would think a woman such as this could become a witness for Jesus Christ. You know the kind of person she had been. But she met Jesus, believed in Him, and "His blood can make the foulest clean." She went back to her village and witnessed for Christ and we read, "Many of the Samaritans believed in Christ through her witness."

A banquet was being held in a certain seminary. Teachers and ministers were discussing what they might have become had they not decided on the ministry or teaching. One said he might have been a salesman, another a businessman. Then one young man who had been a powerful witness in that seminary spoke up and said, "You all know what I was like before Christ came into my life. I was an alcoholic, ruining my life. As long as I live I have no other desire but to witness for Jesus my Saviour and tell all I can what He has done for me."

*The Apostle Paul,  
A Fearless Witness*

He tells King Agrippa about his conversion. The King keeps telling him he is mad, or we would say touched on religion, but Paul keeps on witnessing to his wonderful conversion and for what the Christ has done for him. He says, "With the help of God I continue to this day, witnessing to both small and great." You see, Paul said, "With the help of God." He was not doing this witnessing alone. Oh no, the Hand of God was resting upon him, and he had the power of which Jesus spoke,

the power He wants you and me to have to witness to both small and great, little people, mean people, down and out people, and to great statesmen, great intellectual folk, and wealthy men and women. He witnessed to everybody.

### *Conclusion*

Now, this is just what Christ wants you and me to do. We are called to witness. The need is so great. Only about 28 percent of the world's people are Christians today. Think of it, 72 percent who have never accepted our Savior.

You can witness through your life, "Be like Jesus." You can witness through your testimonies for Christ, witness through your prayers.

You are called to witness. Will you answer that call and say in the words of that hymn,

Oh use me Lord,  
Use even me just as Thou wilt  
And when and where  
Until Thy blessed face I see  
Thy grace, Thy joy, Thy glory share.

### *THE POWER TO SEE IT THROUGH*

II Timothy 4:10 "Demas hath forsaken me having loved this present world."

II Timothy 4:7 "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

*Introduction*

These verses are both in the same chapter. One had the power to see it through to a good finish, the other person lacked this power. An insurance company said, "So many good beginnings, so few good endings." It is very important to have this power to see it through. Jesus said, "This man began to build, but was not able to finish." The good news is this: We, like the Apostle Paul, may have this power to see it through.

*Power to See It Through ,  
In Our Homes*

Remember "Love suffereth long and is kind." Love "seeketh not her own," but what is best for my dear ones? Love never faileth. Of Jesus it was said, "Having loved His own, loved them to the end." With the love for Christ in our hearts, we will have this love for those in our homes. We will not neglect our children, as did one of my mother's friends, when she used to step out to seek excitement. She lacked the power to see it through.

*Power to See It Through  
In Our Work*

Discouragements in all lines of work. In Nehemiah we read, "What do those feeble Jews?" They tried to get Nehemiah to give up his work, but God gave him the power to see it through.

*Power to See It Through In  
Our Christian Life*

Many are like Demas, they go back on the Lord Jesus, "Tempted and tried we need a great Savior." Paul had this great Savior who gave him the power to see it through. He had many discouragements in his churches, his friends, his own life, thorn in the flesh, but he could say at the close, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course." Shall we unite now in a silent prayer and ask the Lord to give us the power to see it through? He did this for Paul and He will do it for you and me. "Jesus never fails."



REFLECTIONS ON THE MINISTRY

I have asked my mother to bring some reflections on her years in the ministry. I have asked her to be open and to give me an account of her years of service so that you might understand a little better what her life was like.

The first thing that she mentioned to me, and I'm sure that anyone who has been in the ministry and has loved it would say, that it's not an easy life. I often marveled myself, as I looked back over the years that I spent at home, and the years that I was quite intimately acquainted with what transpired in the church, was how mother was able to keep the pace.

If I might be allowed a reflection of my own seventeen years to this date in the ministry, I would say it's a difficult life for a man. It has to be a very unusual woman who would be able to partake of this high calling. I felt it was not an easy life, to say the least, for mother because particularly of the prevailing opinion that women, somehow, are just not called of God to preach the cross. The difficulty of continually going from church to church that in many cases would really prefer a man but were not able to support one, the constant moving from place to place, and the dreadful conditions of some of the parsonages, plus the care of a family, certainly did not make life easy.

It is very difficult to separate my mother's opinions sometimes from my own thoughts and opinions of what she had to go through. Mother always liked to look for the ways in which God guided her. She always liked to feel that God helped her to laugh at the humorous incidents that came her way. She tells of one particular church that she went to that, as far as she knew, in all its years had never been self-supporting. That is to say, that did not receive help from the Convention to keep the church doors open. In this particular church there were, she found, three persons who were really quite wealthy. At one business meeting, Mother decided it was time to get them moving. She said that she knew praying was important, but now time had come for them to act. She told them in a very frank manner that they ought to be ashamed of themselves that they had been depending on the Convention for over a hundred years. She recalls that she certainly hadn't fed them honey that first year but that was the year that everyone voted to become a self-supporting church. Mother said that the vinegar just seemed to work its way out in that situation.

One of the big topics, particularly among unchurched people and also I'm afraid sometimes among church people, is that of, "Oh there are so many hypocrites within the church." I asked my mother if in the churches she pastored over so many years whether she found a lot of hypocrites? After careful thought she really could only say that there were three that impressed her as being of this nature. She told me that there may have been many more but these three stood out particularly in her mind. One particular individual was a man who habitually cheated everyone he could.

My mother wanted to add the fact that this man's wife was a very fine Christian woman, but he was of a different bent. Everyone in that church realized that you could never believe anything he would tell you. To make matters considerably worse, he held a very high office in the church. Eventually my mother overcame this difficulty by having him drop this office to finally sing in the choir. He had a very fine voice and I imagine this must have been the least of two evils. Mother still recalls, with a great deal of amusement, how so many times after she would finish preaching, he would come to her and would name someone in the congregation and would say, "You know that sermon just fit such and such a person." Only once does she ever recall him mentioning that the sermon really fit him. He was always very critical of everyone, young and old alike. I don't suppose she'll ever forget the various experiences that she had with this gentleman. From what she has told me, he seemed to possess a great deal of ability, was very active in the church, but certainly did not have a testimony that rang true with his pastor or with others in that congregation.

In one church she was in, there was a woman who always sang over and over again the song entitled, "Moment by Moment," of course, by this expressing her dependency on, and her love for the Lord. One time she came to the house and insisted that my Mother go to the church and have prayer with her. Mother said, "Why the church will be so cold, now can't we just have prayer here at home?" She insisted that the place to pray was in the church. Mother finally gave in and went to the church with her where she insisted on making a long, long prayer. This woman's husband finally developed cancer. She came to my mother and told her

that, when he had found out what he had, he broke down and cried. She said to mother that this was so ridiculous to cry about, after all cancer was really nothing. It's difficult to go into anymore details in regard to this woman but to simply say that she had a very poor reputation within the local church she attended.

Perhaps many other ministers have had like experiences that happened to mother in their pastorates. In this particular church that mother came to serve, she remembers this woman coming to shake hands with her and feeling that the Holy Spirit was directing her that this woman was not sincere. She always wanted to pray for the heathen. Mother finally said to her on a certain occasion, "Why don't you pray that your family will be saved?" This is another case where it is not wise to go into the details of the difficulty that this woman had caused former pastors and people. I would only mention that her husband suffered a great deal through her actions. The Bible tells us that we are not to judge, however someone has observed that even though we are not judges we ought to be fruit inspectors. "By their fruits you shall know them." Mother has told me that in all the years she preached, these three were the ones that stood out in her mind as not living the life that they professed. If you should ask my mother, "Are the churches full of hypocrites?" The answer would have to be, "No, that's not the case." If I might be allowed an observation, I would simply say that there must be very few within the framework of our churches.

One of the things that a minister has to deal with eventually, is to counsel people in their time of greatest sorrow and of greatest need. I personally would not consider mother to have devoted an overabundance of her time to counseling people. I thought it might be wise to

mention how she dealt with people who were so distraught they were considering suicide. My mother tells me of one Thanksgiving Day when she and the family had just sat down to eat. She then proceeded to tell them that she must leave at once to make a very important call. She recalls how they urged her to eat first, but she insisted that there was no time, that she must go at once. She told me of how she went to a dear mother's home not too far from where we lived. This poor woman had a retarded son whose condition was so severe that he was only able to lie in his crib and moan almost constantly. Sometime before, she had lost her husband who had died quite unexpectedly during an operation. This poor soul had also lost two lovely children who died of pneumonia. Mother says that when she arrived at this woman's home the woman came to the door with her hat and coat on and had her son in her arms. Mother remembers saying to her, "Oh, are you going to your sister's home for Thanksgiving dinner?" She replied with, "No, I'm going to drown myself and my son in the river." I would just add here that the river was very, very close to this woman's house. Mother told her that she wanted a cup of coffee and that she was going to stay right with her until she would promise that she would fight the good fight and keep her faith. At last she promised that she would do this. Mother saw this woman a few years after and she told mother that she was fighting the good fight and was keeping her faith. Mother has said how she thanked God for the leading of the Holy Spirit on that Thanksgiving Day.

In another community, on a certain occasion, she was called to go see a dear person whose husband had died suddenly of a heart attack. When mother arrived at this

person's home the woman insisted that she was going to end her life. Mother recalls that in her conversation she reminded this woman she had two sons and a daughter who needed her. After a period of time, this woman, through, I'm sure, my mother's persuasion and the grace of God, agreed to try to live for their sakes. I might interject here that mother had a very unique way of getting people to feel that they were really needed and wanted, not only in the churches, but in the community and by their families. This was evidently what this woman needed at this time. Just to feel that she was really needed now that her husband was gone. This woman was able to get a very good position in a fine school. In this particular position she was able to have both her younger children with her while the older son was away finishing college. Her family was proud of their mother's courage, in spite of the adversity she faced in the loss of her husband. I would add that the woman, at the time she contemplated suicide, was not a Christian but later she gave her heart to the Lord.

The next particular case mother remembers so vividly, with all of the circumstances that surround the family. Not to go into a great deal in this particular one, but to simply say that one morning my mother went into the local drug store to have an ice cream soda. A certain woman in the community was in the drug store at the same time. On that day she seemed exceptionally cheerful. Mother said that both the druggist and she were pleased to see her this way because previously she had always seemed so sad. A short time after this mother went home. The phone rang and mother was told that this woman had shot herself. This woman had been discovered, lying on the floor, by her daughter

when she returned home from finishing her classes at school. This woman had the report that she had cancer. When my mother was notified of this woman's death she was told that the father had said that he was going to end his life. Without any hesitation, mother rushed to the home and told him that he must live for the sake of his children. He finally agreed to do this and mother said she felt that he was a very good father to them.

No minister could ever pass up telling of their favorite weddings and mentioning some of the funerals where they were able to help those people who were in need.

Mother, I suppose being in smaller communities, did not perhaps have the number of weddings that a lot of ministers might conduct. I asked her a little of her philosophy in regard to performing marriage ceremonies. She did tell me that there were at least two that she refused to perform. Mother, in my personal opinion, is not a strict legalist, and as a rule, would bend over backwards in helping people, even those with pretty shaky backgrounds, if she could hear their side of the story.

One was of a man who came to the parsonage with a young girl and said he was divorced from his first wife. When mother asked him on what grounds the divorce had taken place he said, "That's none of your business." She instantly told him that she would not perform the ceremony. He immediately left but before he left the town he stopped in one of the local grocery stores and proceeded to tell the manager of that store what he thought of mother and how very unobliging she had been. The manager told this gentleman that he was very glad that they had a minister in town who stood for what she thought was right. I don't know what frame of mind

this gentleman was in, when he left that community to be married elsewhere.

The other wedding that mother refused to perform was a particularly difficult one for her. In one particular town she was in, there was a young lady who sang in the choir of the church my mother pastored. She had decided to marry a man who said he was leaving his first wife and two children because he liked this woman better. Mother felt this was very wrong and told both him and the young lady that she just could not perform this ceremony. Knowing mother and knowing how attached she was to this young lady, I know it must have been very difficult for her to take this stand. This couple then went to another minister who was willing to perform the ceremony. Quite an interesting sidelight to this refusal of my mother's was that this young woman continued to sing in the choir that my mother pastored. Mother always felt that she ought to stand for what she thought was right in God's sight.

One of the weddings that Mother conducted is one that I have heard her tell about many, many times. It was a very stormy night in one of the Maine communities where mother pastored. A man came to the door and asked to be married. My mother said, "Do you have the marriage license?" He said, "Yes, and I have the girl too," Mother performed the ceremony and as was mothers's custom at that time, after the completion, she asked them if they desired a wedding book or a certificate for their own use. She said they whispered together for a period of time and finally the young man said he wanted a book and that his bride wanted a certificate. Mother told them that she would send for a certificate and get that to them later. She had the book to



give them then. After they whispered back and forth again, the young man handed mother two dollars.

Another wedding service that stands out in my mother's mind was that of my brother, Paul. In the wedding prayer Mother was so busy praying that Paul and his bride would be happy, that she forgot to pronounce them husband and wife until Paul whispered, "pronounce us husband and wife." She did this and then offered another prayer. The bride's mother said that she thought it was a very nice service but a little unusual.

Not only did Mother have the marriage of her youngest son, but she performed the marriage ceremony for me. She remembers arriving at the church in a terrific snow storm and finding that she had forgotten to bring the usual wedding ceremony. She tells me that I mentioned to her that it was a little shorter than the usual ceremony. It was my privilege in that ceremony to have my brother offer a prayer.

A wedding my Mother remembers with particular fondness was one for a couple who became quite well known who were very faithful in the church and were life-long friends of my mother's. This wedding ceremony was to be held right after a funeral service. I don't know if ministers were afraid at that time that they would get the two ceremonies mixed up, but in kidding, many ministers have said that they have always been afraid that they would. This particular service was for Clifford MacIntyre and Hilda Holt. Mother remembers that as she went from the funeral service she prayed that she would be cheerful and she said God really helped her in this case.

Mother said she always had to do a lot of praying before she conducted funeral services. At one par-

ticular service that she was called to conduct, she prayed in earnest that God would guide her and that she would have just the message for this particular case, as it was desperately needed. The circumstances were very, very sad. A young woman, who I briefly mentioned in another section, had fallen off the top of a truck that had been transporting hay. This young girl was the pride and joy of her mother and father. She was instantly killed in that fall. Just a short time before, she had accepted Jesus Christ as her Lord and Saviour and had been baptized. At this service, the church was just full of people. It had been said in that town that now this girl's mother and father would give up their faith. Her parents had only been Christians about a year. They never did give up their faith and are faithful in the church of Jesus Christ today. In this service, mother definitely felt that the Lord led her to say, for the first and for the only time, that this girl had been called to higher service. My mother recently received a letter from the mother of this girl that the Scripture that had been used in the funeral service had helped her, especially the verse "underneath are the everlasting arms."

She was called to officiate at a funeral service which she tells me will always stand out in her mind as one of the saddest ones that she had to conduct in all the years of her ministry. The circumstances involved in this particular case was in regard to two cousins who began to argue and fight over a certain girl that they were interested in. As the arguments grew worse, one of them became so angry that he shot and killed his cousin, and then shot himself to death. Mother remembers that when she arrived to conduct the service, a deacon met

her at the entrance where the service was to be held and said to her, "You put those two young men where they belong." Mother replied, "Thanks for the advice, I'll leave that to God, and I will try to bring comfort to the parents." At the cemetery, one of the fathers said to my mother, "You'll never know how much your words have helped me."

At another funeral service, and I only bring this one in to show my mother's deep concern for those in attendance who mourn the passing of loved ones, and to particularly point out in the many services that she conducted, it was not her desire to stand as judge and to place this one in heaven and this one in hell. This service was conducted for a woman who had hardly ever, to the best of my mother's knowledge, attended church and was particularly noted in the community for spending her time playing cards. Mother remembers that the minister who conducted this service put this lady right into heaven. Mother had the prayer in that service and in the prayer she prayed earnestly that everyone who had not accepted Christ as Lord and Saviour, would do so because if they did not they could not possibly go to heaven.

Mother says she will always remember the words of one precious mother whose five children had burned to death. This woman had gone to work and had left a young woman who was the babysitter in charge of the children. Evidently this babysitter was careless, and this tragedy was brought about. Mother remembers after the service had been conducted and they were leaving the cemetery this woman, who had suffered this great loss said, "I will see them again in heaven." As she spoke those words, mother said her face lit up. My mother observed from this that only God could bring

comfort like that.

She remembers the last words of her father-in-law. He was extremely ill and while Dad was talking to his mother, my mother sang to him, "When the roll is called up yonder I'll be there." Shortly after that time she was asked to offer prayer at his funeral service.

Another service that particularly stands out in her mind was the service of a mother whose son, an Episcopal Rector, was the one who conducted the service. My mother was asked to assist in this service. During this time he requested those in attendance stand and sing, "Oh God our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come." This meant a great deal to my mother, of course, being asked to assist in this service, and the fact of those in attendance singing this great hymn of the church.

My grandmother's service, my mother's mother, was, of course, a difficult one for the entire family, even though the death was not unexpected because of her advanced age. She was in her nineties. At that time, two hymns that were used in the service made a great impression on my mother. One of these hymns was, "All Hail the Power of Jesus Name," and the other was, "Abide With Me." These two hymns were a request of my grandmother. The stanza that helped my mother most she remembers was, "When other helpers fail and comforts flee, help of the helpless, Oh abide with me."

Mother said there is only one funeral service that she really left with a guilty conscience. In this particular town where she pastored, a young man asked mother to call on his uncle who had a summer place in that community. Mother made the call, and spent some time visiting and talking with him. As she got ready to leave she asked him if he would like her to offer a prayer. He

said he didn't mind but after saying this he said, "But I never pray." Mother prayed, then left. A few days later this man passed away with a heart attack. He told one of his relatives before he expired that he would like my mother to conduct the funeral service but did not wish to have any of the Bible read. Mother agreed to conduct the service and for the first and only time in her ministry she did not read from God's Word. She said, however, that when she prayed she quoted quite a few verses of Scripture. She felt so guilty after the service that she asked her Heavenly Father to forgive her for even consenting to conduct a service in which the Scripture could not even be read. It was mother's custom in her funeral service to read the twenty third Psalm and also a portion of the ninetieth Psalm, then she would read a portion of the New Testament before the message.

One day she had a funeral service way out of town that she had to drive to and she felt very ill. As she drove to this service for the first time after her Mother's death she felt her dear mother's presence. She had taken her temperature and found it was a little over 103. Before she went into the house, where the service was to be conducted, she asked the Lord if He would take over and that the Holy Spirit would speak through her. She said she felt so ill that she couldn't think. At the close of the service the funeral director said to her that he thought she had the best message he had ever heard her deliver. By that time she was too ill to drive home and one of those present drove. She could say in the words of the chorus, "Jesus Never Fails."

She has shared with me that after a funeral service she always seemed to be particularly tired. Perhaps the

emotional strain was difficult for her, as ministering to people in times of great need takes so much out of a person. She did say, and really believed, that God's power was always ready to help her.

One service I guess she'll never forget was when our dog, Skippy, came to church. During the time when I was in Korea, I sent a two dollar money order home. If I remember correctly I even made it out to Skippy Jackson and asked the folks to buy steak and ice cream for him. Previous to this my folks had written to tell me that Skippy was failing fast. The folks said that he really enjoyed the steak and ice cream. Mother remembers she kept saying, "You must live until Marvin comes home." And he did.

The last Sunday Skippy was on earth, he came up to the pulpit and laid beside it during the service. Mother was just saying as he walked in, that man's best friend is, and of course, she was going to say God. This was the time that Skippy chose to come up the aisle and be beside mother. Mother said that as she raised her hands for the congregation to stand for the closing hymn that he stood up and went up to the choir. She said that everyone in the congregation including herself was laughing by then. One of the members opened the door that he was near and let Skippy outside. When mother shook hands with the people, Skippy stood beside her all the time. Shortly after that Skippy had to be laid away due to a bad heart condition. Skippy was a wonderful dog. He was our dog for about thirteen years. The Scripture says that the spirit of man goeth upward and the spirit of beast goeth downward. My youngest boy asked me a short time ago if dogs went to heaven. At that time I just didn't have an answer to give him, then in my Bi-

ble reading, I came across that portion of Scripture I have just quoted. I have since told him that from this I would presume that there were no dogs in heaven. I would have thought that Skippy would have been a good candidate for that land where there is no parting.

One of the greatest joys that my mother had in all of the years that she was able to preach was the privilege of preaching the ordination sermons for both of her sons. There probably have been very few, if any women in the history of Christianity who have been able to do such a thing as this. Even though many women of course claim their boys for the ministry and pray that God will call them to preach, it would seem that very few, if any have the opportunity to not only claim them for the Lord, but to pray that God will call them to preach, and finally bring the message that, at least in the eyes of the church, set them apart to preach. The text that my mother used in both services was taken from St. Luke 4:18. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He had anointed me to preach Good News."

Mother credits me with helping her not to make her sermons too long. She remembers one particular Sunday morning when I was home on vacation from college that she saw me nodding my head several times during the message. She thought, "He certainly approves of this." When I had nodded the third time she said that she just knew that when we got home that I would tell her that it certainly was a good message. Much to her surprise, when she arrived home, I said, "Mom, didn't you see me nod?" She said, "Yes, I did." "The first time I nodded, mother it was time to quit." This has always stayed with her. In fact, just a short time ago when she supplied on Sunday morning in one of our

American Baptist Churches, one of the officers shook hands with her and said he thought that seeing it was a woman that was to speak that she would talk too long. Mother says she even closed that service a little earlier than usual.

During the forty-one years that my mother was in the ministry she had the usual colds and many other minor inconveniences, but she faced just two operations during that period of time. She lost about six weeks of work due to illness in the entire forty-one years. Of course, there were times when she was away on vacation, attending conventions, etc., but during the majority of the time, she was right on the job. She has told me that she was so thankful for God's protection down through all of those years.

Out of the many calls she had to make she only remembers one blowout on a car that she was driving. The garage owner said to her, "You certainly have good luck!" Mother said that it was not good luck, but God who helped her to make it and not have a blowout on a lonely road where she had been making a call. She told me that one time she and dad were nearly killed when they were crossing a railroad track and were nearly hit by a freight train. Of course, she had the usual snowstorms and the rainstorms that she had to go through, but she was able to faithfully do her work.

Mother had a very unusual approach in dealing with her two sons, one I don't think I'll ever forget was during the time that I served in the Army during the Korean War. I was assigned to the 45th Infantry Division, serving in the 179th Infantry Regiment. Mother who was particularly good about letter writing, decided that she had discovered a very unique method of keep-



ing in contact with her oldest son. She would send me what would be equivalent to a night letter telegram that would be delivered in a few days right up on the front line. Evidently, from what I could gather, these messages were no doubt sent by wire, and then transposed on paper and delivered in just a few days. Of course, the heartbreak for any family was to receive a telegram from the war department in regard to their son, signifying that he was either missing, or killed in action. How many times I thought how strange and how different it was for Mother to send telegrams to me.

One other instance that happened in my life that we all laugh about now, came about this way: I served in the Merchant Marines at the very end of the Second World War, entering at the age of sixteen. I had tried to get into the Navy and they wouldn't take me, but the Merchant Marines were accepting enlistments at that time at my age. After serving in the latter part of 1944 and part of 1945, I returned to finish high school. In 1948 in the fall semester, I entered college. During the middle of my college life the Korean War started, and having been in the Merchant Marines, I was not exempt from the draft. I might add a note that I am sure many Merchant Marine veterans were drafted during the Korean War and to me, this seemed very unjust.

I do feel I received a great deal from the Army, including coming to the place in my life where I was willing to surrender, in a little service on Heartbreak Ridge, to preach the gospel. I had been called at about nine years of age to preach, but had never surrendered my will to Him. After many disputes with my draft board during the last two years of college, and I think about two Presidential greetings, and then later

deferments, they drafted me in October, 1952. I went through basic training at Fort Dix, New Jersey and then, you guessed it, my orders were made out for Fort Lewis, Washington.

That meant just one thing — Korea. This upset my mother to no end. She felt because I had a physical education degree that I should have been sent to the Army physical education school and trained as an instructor. To make a long and very complicated story just a little shorter, Mother went to see the President; of the United States that is. She didn't get to see General Eisenhower but she did make some pretty good contacts and they said that they would change my orders. Somehow I had left, and the notification to change my orders before I left the States, and during the time I was in Japan, never arrived. I've always felt that God had His hand in this matter and was bringing me to a place of surrender. He knew just the spot for me to make that surrender. I tell these two instances from my life just to let you know that mother was not only a preacher, but quite a woman besides.

I asked mother in these reflections if she would have done anything differently in regard to her church work. She said there were only three churches that she would want to mention. She always felt that she made a mistake in moving to Canton, Maine, particularly because she only stayed there one year. She was quick to add, however, that Ralph Dailey accepted Christ as Lord and Savior, and later went to Alaska as a missionary. As a postscript to this, I would simply add, as mentioned before, that I pastored this church quite some time later. God certainly moves in mysterious ways.

Mother felt that the second mistake she made was in

retiring two, or possibly three, years earlier than she should have from the Athens, Pennsylvania Church. She had a severe kidney infection and decided to retire. God had blessed her work and it was prospering. The majority of the people wanted her to stay and she feels now that this decision was made too hastily. This also caused Dad to retire early and not get the full benefit of Social Security, and I know this has bothered my mother a great deal.

The third mistake that my mother felt she made was moving to the Oneonta Church in New York State to serve as Interim pastor. When she made the move, she said it seemed to be the right thing to do at that time. It was a very difficult church and it does not seem to her that she accomplished a great deal while she was there. During the time that she was there, Dad was overcome by gas and had to be rushed to the emergency hospital. A nerve had been permanently damaged by the gas and this caused a constant noise in Dad's ears. Mother says she firmly believes that all things work together for good to those who love the Lord, and even if she made the mistakes, God, in His great love, will cause all things to work together for good.

In reflecting on Mother's philosophy of the ministry, I would think that perhaps what mother used to say sums it up very uniquely. Jesus said in His Word, "For their sakes, I sanctify myself." Mother often would repeat to herself, "For Thy sake I sanctify myself." She honestly believed that she was set apart for the Ministry. She believed that this call that she had was a real and direct call from Christ Jesus, that God had appointed her, and ordained her to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and she was going to do it no matter what. She

tried to serve the people and wanted to help people of all ages, but in doing this she wanted to lead them, above all else, to Christ. She wanted to tell of His love for them and that He could change their lives. Mother considered herself above all else, a preacher of the Cross. One definition of philosophy is that it is a knowledge of conduct. My mother's conduct during her many faithful years in the ministry, in my personal opinion, was beyond reproach and she was truly a servant to Jesus Christ in what too often, is a world of Lords.

## *Chapter 11*

### *RETIREMENT AND CONCLUSION*

What does a pastor do when she retires? I suppose that life perhaps may not be too different than others who come to this place. Mother, as I mentioned earlier, retired and then came out of retirement to do supply work which lasted for a period of two years. The place where she did supply work was Oneonta, New York. After that period of supply work, she spent about nine months living in an apartment in Athens, Pennsylvania. From there she moved to Cheesequake Village which is in Matawan, New Jersey. It is in a retirement center. They have lived there for a period of about three years. Mother tells me that she still likes people and now she does a little supply preaching from time to time when the occasion arises. She sings in the choir, is faithful in her attendance, and a member in good standing at the First Baptist Church of Matawan. It's interesting to note that since her retirement she has had two pastors, first my brother who pastored First Baptist Church of Matawan until moving to Millinocket, Maine and at the present time her pastor is Reverend Lewis Kissenwether. She tells me that she prays for her pastor.

Since her retirement, she has been able to make four

trips to California. On one of these trips she was able to stay in a rented apartment for a period of about four months. She has been able to become acquainted with the West Coast branch of the Jackson family and to know and really appreciate seeing the grandkids grow up. Since my brother has moved to Millinocket, Maine she has been able to make two trips there. She tells me she really likes to travel and enjoys seeing new and different places. Mother likes to read, and she tells me that she considers this to really be her hobby. She does enjoy writing notes to friends and likes to visit stores and go shopping. I guess she is still a city girl at heart. I would have to say that perhaps the thing that never has changed in her life, along with many others, is her great love affair with the telephone. She calls me nearly every week. I have no idea how often she calls Paul but I'm sure the telephone company is absolutely overjoyed at her constant use of Mr. Bell's grand invention.

Mother likes to attend, besides the worship service in the church, the various church suppers and also attends the meeting that is held once a month in regard to the management of Cheesequake Village. I understand this meeting is of the various property owners.

Mother still likes to cook and tries to get one good meal a day for her and Dad. She tries to take good care of herself and admits she has to watch her weight. She says that she has been told by both her daughter-in-laws that she is a pretty good mother-in-law and minds her business well.

One of the things that she wants to do in the future is to catalogue all her sermons so that they might be of use and of value to whoever might wish to read them or gain sermon help from them. She has never really kept her

sermons in card file form or in a notebook of any type even though she writes her sermons out, often times on loose leaf notebook paper. She tells me that she has about three good sized boxes of them in various places at home.

I asked her quite frankly whether she missed the ministry? She said that she really does miss it. She shared with me that she would perhaps like to serve, if the condition should arise, as an Interim pastor. Perhaps she will be able to do this in the future. She tells me that now she spends a great deal of time praying for her two sons, their wives and their children. It personally is a difficult thing for me to realize that my mother has finally really retired from the ministry. On her first retirement I failed to mention that she and Dad bought a place in Norridgewock, Maine because they particularly felt that they had so many friends there and they would like to retire in this community where she had pastored. I guess they had forgotten how bad the snowstorms were. Dad in his physical condition was not supposed to shovel snow so they were only there about three months before selling their home. Then something like five months in Sayre, New York and then out of retirement. I sometimes wonder if Mother, in the back of her mind, perhaps really wouldn't like to come out of retirement again.

I have been recently saying to her, "Oh mother just think; you had both of your boys wedding ceremonies, and both ordination services. If you could only have both our funeral services I imagine you would go down in History as being the only woman in the history of Christianity who has ever done anything like this!"

I don't believe that Mother is what you would say unhappy in retirement, but I do feel that she does get

restless and is anxious, perhaps, to preach a few more sermons, sing a few more hymns, maybe even put a few more furnaces in a few more cold parsonages. Retirement has not been the easiest thing in the world for mother and yet I sense she really has adjusted quite well.

Perhaps in my mother's life, as in so many ministers' lives, there is little time to really develop a hobby. I have often felt this was a lack in my life and I have felt it so, as I've tried to analyze my mother's life. Many insurance statistics, as I understand, point to the fact that ministers live a long life. My mother will be seventy-four in May of 1975 and seems to be in good health. At the present time, as I've mentioned, she has talked somewhat of becoming an Interim pastor. She has also talked of moving to California particularly to be near me and also because of the quite severe winters in New Jersey. She feels that she ought to be near one of us boys and perhaps knows that Maine, even though she lived there so many years, is not the place to spend her retirement.

She enjoys the friends that she has made at the church in Matawan and would hate in a way to part with them. She also feels that she would have to sell or get rid of many of their prize possessions that she has collected down through the years. Of course, she knows she can't take them to heaven, but wants to keep them while she is here. Mother is quite mentally alert, and, as I mentioned, is well read. She has a love for people and I believe is now coming to the difficult decision of whether to spend her remaining years on the east coast or to make the jump to the west.

Several years ago the American Baptist Churches were at that time holding an annual convention. This



convention was held in Atlantic City, New Jersey. I remember walking along the boardwalk with my mother and brother and coming across a friend from California. This particular minister is well-noted for his quick wit. I said to my mother and brother, "I would like to have you meet Dr. Judson. He pastors Trinity Baptist Church in Santa Monica, not too far from where I live." Then I said, "Oh Fred, my mother pastors in New York State and my brother pastors in New Jersey." He said, "I think that is just terrible, three people in one family living off the church." We, of course, have laughed over that many times.

I don't remember how the circumstances came about but I remember I was pastoring the First Baptist Church of Chino and someone said to me, "What do you make a year?" I said, "About sixty thousand." They said, "Sixty thousand!" My reply was, "Yes, I make about ten here and about fifty up there."

Even though Mother was a third generation preacher, in my humble opinion, she really gave much more than she took. While she was making her living here on earth from the churches, I sense that she was storing up treasures in heaven where the inflation rate doesn't exist, where the Scripture says, "Thieves do not break through, and where moth and rust doth not corrupt." When Mother steps across that line that divides this life from the next, I trust our Lord will say to her, "Well done, thy good and faithful woman preacher, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Few can say, "Mama was a preacher!"

I am taking this opportunity just to hit upon a very few highlights of my mother's life. My mother's life in order to be analyzed, would need to be divided into, a

look at childhood and family background, high school and college years, the active ministry, and brief look at retirement. There is no question in my mind that mother was greatly influenced from early childhood by both her Father and Mother, by the environment that she lived in, by her brothers and sisters, by the people in the churches in the communities, and within the schools.

Mother says that she at one time remembers playing the part of a preacher. Even though the surrounding influences no doubt opened her heart to what God might have for her, I am under the opinion in her life, and if I might be permitted to say so in my own life also, that if you are called by God, that heredity, environment, or any other factor cannot negate or change this call. I do not mean to say by this that everyone needs to have a Macedonian call as the Apostle Paul had, or such a dramatic experience as he had on the road to Damascus, but what I wish to point out here is simply that the call of God is God's prerogative. Someone has said, "If you can do anything else but preach, do it." I believe that God's call is plain, unmistakable, reliable, and you can trust it. I believe that God's call can come to whom He chooses no matter how good or how poor family background might be.

Because my mother was a third generation preacher, I see no indication that God would necessarily choose her for this ministry above some other woman. I do not mean to say by this that the prayers of righteous people are not heard. I do not know in what way and how much my grandparents prayed for her, except I know they did pray that she would be in the center of His Will. God chooses all kinds from all kinds of backgrounds to do His Will and to preach the Cross.

I am a fourth generation preacher. I am acquainted with a fifth generation preacher. Unfortunately, I need to add I'm also acquainted in our family on my mother's side with relatives who, at this time at least, do not profess a need for Jesus and His saving power. We, of course, trust the day will come when they will recognize their need for Him. "Faith of our Fathers," even though it is a wonderful hymn, is not really good enough for a son or a daughter. They need to have their own faith and their own call. My mother's call to preach was not her father's call, it was her call.

In her college years, even though they helped to mold her future life, they again did not constitute the call of God. Many young men and women have been trained, have studied for the ministry, perhaps have even succeeded in the ministry in the eyes of the world. Not all of the prophets in the Old Testament were called of God. Certainly there were many preaching in Paul's day who were not called of God. Today it seems that there must be those who are not called. I am not in the position to judge, only to sense from my own ministry what a tragedy, what a terrible thing to live with, if you are preaching and are not called by God Himself. There is absolutely no question within my mind that God called me to preach. I fought this call from the time I was nine years of age until I finally surrendered in my twenties, while serving in the Army. There is no question that I was called to preach and I personally feel, even though I cannot explain it, that He knew me when I was in my mother's womb.

My mother has no doubt within her heart that she was called of God to preach. In times of great crisis this is the sustaining and driving force that will not let you go,

when you can say with the Apostle Paul, "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." Then you can have no fear what man will do unto you. Knowing what my mother went through as a child, in college when she finally made the decision to become a minister, knowing what she went through during her years in the pastorate, I would tell you that if she had not been called I believe from the bottom of my heart that she could never have endured the service of preaching Christ the King. In those days the thought of a woman even being allowed to enter Baptist circles and to obtain a church must have been almost impossible and yet, our Lord specializes in impossibilities. In her ministry, which commenced shortly after graduation from college, it was evident from the very beginning that God had His hand on this woman's life. From the time that she was called to pastor her very first church, until the time that she retired, God provided a way when there was none.

Many of the difficulties that my mother faced were, of course, difficulties that were common to all professions, but the difficulties within the ministry are quite unique. If I might be permitted to say that one of the difficulties that Mother faced, ministers face in a lesser degree today. I suppose for lack of a better name, it's called the image of the clergyman. Mother did not fit the image, but learned to live with it.

The second difficulty that ministers, as perhaps in few professions, have to face is that the job is never finished even though there may be days off, travel and vacations. When you're in the ministry, you are on constant call when you can be reached. The only way that a minister can really get away from this is to be out of town. The pastor might slip away for a few days but

when the family is there to take care of, they just won't let you get away.

The third thing that mother faced in the ministry was the fact that she was ministering to those who were steeped in tradition and prejudice. I do not wish to imply that there are not prejudice and traditions in all parts of our country, but having been born and spent a great deal of my life within the confines of New England, it is my opinion that there is perhaps no area within the country that is more willing to express and proclaim their traditions and prejudice. Others may have these, but are perhaps not quite as vocal or not quite as willing to show that when they are against something, they're really against it. Mother had the difficulty of breaking into this situation and ministering in this situation for a great part of her life.

The fourth thing that mother had to face is really something that all ministers must face. I often find this quite difficult to deal with where I live. No matter where you live, as a minister you are somewhat, if I could use this terminology, an oddity on the block. Your neighbors may be nice, your family may be well behaved but there is always that question, does a minister really fit into a neighborhood? I know that Abraham the Scripture tells us had no certain dwelling place. Perhaps this adds to the difficulty of being accepted where you live.

The fifth thing that mother had to face was the plain and simple fact that a woman just does not and should not preach. There is so much more difficulty that I might mention in regard to what the family went through. The fact that we were Preacher's kids, and the Dad wasn't the preacher, the mother was, the example

that we were supposed to set in the communities that we lived in, the rejection that we sometimes felt from our peer group, plus those that were over us in various aspects of our community and school life, made what I honestly considered to be quite an abnormal childhood and quite a shattering experience, at least for me. I do not wish to downgrade the ministry in any respect because I think it is the greatest calling in the world and mother received that call and her family was a very real part of her life. I could add considerably more here but I feel that I have covered adequately those things which I wish to portray.

“To God be the glory great things He has done.” He called a woman preacher. It was my mother. You know what? Mama was a preacher.